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A

TREATISE

ON THE

MILLENNIUM;

IN WHICH

THE PREVAILING THEORIES ON THAT SUBJECT ARE CAREFULLY EXAMINED;

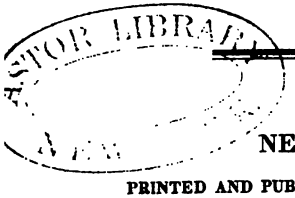
AND

THE TRUE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE ATTEMPTED TO BE ELICITED AND ESTABLISHED.

BY GEORGE BUSH, A.M.

AUTHOR

OF 'QUESTIONS AND NOTES UPON GENESIS AND EXODUS.'



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PREFACE.

It is matter of deep regret that the popular vocabulary of Christian doctrine should contain so large a proportion of vague and undefined or ill-defined terms. That a religion based upon a revelation from heaven, designed, not to *confound*, but to *instruct* its votaries,—a religion naturally to be regarded as the native element of Truth, the appropriate sphere of clear knowledge and unambiguous diction, from which the dimning and darkening mystifications of error were entirely banished,—that such a religion, in the utterances of its disciples, should abound in terms and phrases, many of them of incessant recurrence, to which no *precise ideas* were ordinarily affixed, is certainly an infelicity never enough to be deplored. Hence the angry controversies which have agitated and rent so often the Christian world. Hence too the ill-starred partition of the church into various conflicting sects, each clustering pertinaciously around some chosen form of words, which its opponent as pertinaciously rejects. That this diversity of creed among Christians, like every other species of evil, is overruled, in the counsels of God, for good, cannot be questioned for a moment; yet as little, we think, is it to be doubted

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that the thing in itself *is* an evil, and one which the more perfect operation of Christianity will finally do away.

We are well aware that this ambiguity of language, and the consequent indefiniteness of apprehension which obtains in regard to the objects of religious faith, arises in great measure from the intrinsically mysterious nature of the subject-matter of revelation, and the limited grasp of the human intellect, so unequal to the mastery of the grand and overwhelming themes of the inspired oracles. But after every abatement on this score, the conviction still remains, that a less pardonable cause is at the bottom of much of the evil of which we complain. It cannot surely be doubted that the sacred volume was given to man *in order to be understood.* It would be at once a gross misnomer as to the book itself, and a foul reflection upon its Author, to denominate that a *revelation* which was at the same time so shrouded in triple mystery as to baffle the discernment of the unlettered, and to mock the prying researches of the curious and the learned. Not that we count upon the practicability of all classes of readers becoming equally well versed in its contents; for as this revelation is couched in languages which have ceased to be vernacular to the people of any nation, a superior insight into its disclosures will ever accrue to those who make themselves familiar with the sacred original tongues; and as the facilities for this attainment are constantly increasing, and light is pouring in from numerous other sources upon the interpretation of the inspired

writings, it is easily conceivable that each successive generation shall advance far beyond its immediate predecessor in every department of biblical science. In seeking, therefore, for the source of that 'blindness in part,' which hath happened to the religionists of every age, we cannot be mistaken in referring it, in great measure, *to the neglect of the original languages of Scripture.* Men have not been studious to ascertain with absolute precision the ideas attached by the Holy Ghost to the words and phrases employed by the sacred penmen. Neglecting the canons of philology, heedless of investigating the *usus loquendi* in respect to leading words and phrases, and paying but slight attention to the sources of archæological illustration, they have too often imposed a construction upon the language of holy writ derived from the systems of the schools, the placets of renowned doctors, or the dictation of ecclesiastical synods. Alas! how many venerable theories and darling dogmas in theology would be demolished, as by a magician's wand, by the simple touch of the finger of philological exegesis! Here then, we repeat it, in the failure to resort to the original fountain-heads of truth, we find a large portion of the obscurity of religious language adequately accounted for; and as we here find the bane, here also we come to the knowledge of the antidote.

Again, it must be admitted that there is, in the mass of men, an innate aversion to a rigid examination of the grounds of the opinions they have once adopted, or to a critical analysis of the terms by which they are ordinarily expressed. They do not

like to have the quiet of their faith disturbed by an insinuation of the weakness of the grounds upon which it rests. The ancient and accredited technicalities of religion, hallowed as they are by long usage, and wedded to the thoughts, if not to the affections, by early association, are clung to with the most unyielding tenacity. We shrink from the rude process of investigation. Inquiry strikes us as little short of profanation, and we shudder at it as at the lifting up of axes against the carved work of the sanctuary. Although we may be in fact unable to substantiate our belief fully to our own minds, yet the bare thought of a change, as the result of canvassing our opinions anew, fills us with alarm, and binding our established persuasions still closer to our hearts, we say with Job, 'I will die in my nest,' admitting no treacherous doubts within the precincts of our faith for fear of a mental insurrection. Thus the dreary bird of night

> ———"does to the moon complain
> Of such as wandering near her secret bowers,
> Molest her ancient solitary reign."

But surely it will be conceded that truth is at all times to be preferred to error, though it should be supposed that the error were one of a comparatively slight and innoxious character. The rigid scrutiny of our opinions, therefore, is but the homage due to truth; and the man who aids us in disabusing ourselves even of an innocent error, may justly lay claim to some measure of the gratitude bestowed upon him who puts us in possession of a new truth.

In fact, although in the work of the husbandman the eradication of tares is not the same with the production of wheat, yet in mental and moral tillage the deracination of error is in many cases but another name for the implantation of truth.

The tenor of these remarks applies, if we mistake not, with peculiar pertinency to the subject of the prevailing impressions—opinions they can scarcely be called—respecting the *Millennium;* a term denoting, in its popular sense, a future felicitous state of the church and the world of a thousand years' duration, of which, while every one has some vague anticipation, almost no one has any clear and well-defined conception. No phraseology in prayer, in preaching, in the religious essay, or in the monthly-concert address is more common than that of *millennial* state, *millennial* reign, *millennial* purity, *millennial* glory, &c; all betokening the expectation of a coming condition in the affairs of the church infinitely transcending, in peace, piety, and bliss, the most favoured epochs which have yet marked its annals. Now it may well be made a question, Upon what is this expectation founded? Has it unequivocally the warrant of any express declaration of holy writ? Or is it any thing more than a mere traditionary tenet, which from time immemorial has in some way obtained currency among the pious, and which, having received from our forefathers in childhood, has become with us a matter of mechanical repetition in after-life, when

"The priest hath finished what the nurse begun."

How few are there of the vast multitude of those who habitually have this kind of expression upon their lips, who are able 'to give a reason of the (millennial) hope that is in them?'—how few who really and truly, on this point, 'know what they say or whereof they affirm?' Let it be observed, however, that our interrogatory concerns not so much the belief, that a brighter and benigner period is yet to dawn upon our world—that an era of pre-eminent peace, purity, and prosperity, constituting what is frequently called 'the latter day glory,' is yet destined to bless the globe, succeeding and compensating 'the years wherein we have seen trouble;' for this is abundantly testified by the predictions of the former and the latter prophets, and shadowed forth under many a significant parable, type, and allegory; the point of our inquiry is this:—On what sufficient grounds has this period come to be limited, in the minds of Christians, to the precise term of a thousand years, after which it is supposed that a grand defection is to ensue, and the followers of Christ to be again reduced to a diminutive handful? Judging from other portions of the prophetic oracles, our conclusion would certainly be altogether the reverse. Dan. 7. 18, 27. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom *for ever, even for ever and ever.* And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an *everlasting* kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Again, Dan. 2. 44. "And in the

days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall *not be left to other people*, but it shall break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, *and it shall stand for ever.*" These annunciations would certainly seem to preclude the prospect of any mere secular empire ever acquiring that ascendancy which it is yet supposed will be acquired by the post-millennial Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse. To this we are aware it will be replied, that the 20th chapter of the Revelation, in announcing that 'the Dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, shall be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit a thousand years, and that the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and the word of God, should live and reign with Christ a thousand years, while the rest of the dead should not live again till the thousand years were finished,' affords a sufficient warrant for the general expectation of the Christian world on this subject. This, however, it will be observed, is alleged on the presumption, that the millennial period spoken of by John is yet future, the very point which we shall endeavour to show is gratuitously assumed. Upon this presumption the labours of nearly all preceding expositors have been unhesitatingly based, and the object which they have mainly set themselves to accomplish has been, to fix the period of the commencement of this golden age of Zion. With this view they have constructed various arrangements of the chronological eras of the seals, trumpets, and vials; of the reign of the beast, and the resurrection

of the witnesses; while, for the leading *characters* of the period, they have had recourse to what they conceived to be the parallel announcements of Isaiah and other ancient prophets, not doubting that their sublime visions of ultimate glory to the church pointed to precisely the same epoch with the Millennium of the Apocalypse. Now in all this we are constrained to believe, that the tower has been begun to be erected before the foundation was properly laid. For with one who *takes nothing for granted* in the matter of biblical exposition the first inquiry would naturally be; What is to be understood by the *Dragon* or the *Satan* (the adversary) who is to be bound?—what by his *binding*?—and what by the *Bottomless Pit* (Abyss) in which he is represented as being shut up? For as the book of Revelation is couched throughout in a continuous series of symbols or hieroglyphics, the inference *a priori* is, that the Dragon is as truly a symbolic personage as the Beast with whom he acts in concert, or the Woman clothed in scarlet and purple, and drunk with the blood of the saints, portrayed as seated upon the beast and swaying his movements. If the Dragon be taken for the devil literally and personally, or the prince of fallen spirits, what, we ask, can possibly be intended by his being described with seven heads and ten horns? The truth is, this portion of the hieroglyphical scenery of the Revelation, on the common interpretation, never has been, and never can be, satisfactorily explained. The great point, therefore, which the reader will find laboured in the ensuing pages is to settle clearly and

demonstratively the symbolical import of the Dragon, for upon this the whole doctrine of the Millennium mainly hinges. In connexion with this, the writer has endeavoured, at some length, to show the recondite meaning couched under the emblem of the *Abyss* into which the Dragon was cast, and to fix with as much certainty as the subject will admit the precise political powers shadowed forth by the mystic denomination of Gog and Magog.

The plan of the work unavoidably forced upon the author the necessity of somewhat of an imposing array of learned citations; for this he bespeaks the indulgence of his reader. If the inquiry could have been conducted without them, his pages would not have been encumbered with a mass of matter of so repellent a character. As the quotations, however, are all translated, he hopes the mere English reader will not be deterred, by the formidable aspect of his pages, from prosecuting a perusal to which the title-leaf and the table of contents may perhaps invite him.

Finally, the writer solicits a charitable view of the causes which have led him to the adoption of a theory of the Millennium so diverse from that generally entertained. In his own mind he is conscious of having embraced it from no motive of broaching a novel hypothesis, for in truth it is not novel, or from the prurient promptings of a general disposition to thrust upon the public a set of crude interpretations of the sacred writings. He has been forced purely by stress of evidence to adopt the conclusion announced, and, in some sort, supported, in the ensuing work; and as his object has been to

exhibit in a connected view the chain of proofs which have determined his own convictions, he feels free to demand, as matter of common justice, that the reader should sit in judgment, not, in the first instance, upon the conclusion itself, which must necessarily encounter a host of prejudice, but upon the sufficiency or insufficiency of the reasons alleged in its support. Let the premises be refuted before the conclusion is denied. This conclusion, whether sound or not, involves, indeed, the startling position that the *Millennium*, strictly so called, is PAST; but that the writer has not been led to embrace or utter this opinion merely from a perverse love of paradox, and that he has no disposition ruthlessly to pluck from the bosom of the Christian or the philanthropist so fond and sacred a hope as that of a coming age of light and glory to the church, without offering any thing to compensate the spoliation, will be evident to every one who shall be sufficiently interested to follow his speculations to their close. Instead of robbing the treasury of Christian hope of a gem so precious, and of abstracting from benevolent effort so mighty a motive, it will be seen that his view of the futurities of Zion, admitting the Millennium to be past, opens to the eye of faith a still more cheering prospect, a lengthened vista of richer and brighter beatitudes.

> "No hope that way, is
> Another way so high an hope, that e'en
> Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond,
> But doubts discovery there."

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ON THE

MILLENNIUM.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT OPINIONS, JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN, ON THE SUBJECT OF A MILLENNIUM.

Definition of the word Millennium—The doctrine of the Millennium founded but upon a single express Passage of Scripture—Diversity of opinions as to the Time of its Commencement—Jewish Origin of the Millennarian Hypothesis—Built upon an allegorical Exposition of the history of the Creation in six days followed by the Rest of the seventh—Confirmed by Extracts—Estimate of the value of the Rabbinical Tradition—Early adopted by several of the Christian Fathers—Rejected by others—Controversy on the subject in the Primitive Church—Extracts from the writings of the Fathers—Probable Reasons of the early Prevalence of Millennarian sentiments—Testimony of Gibbon.

THE etymological import of the word *Millennium* denotes, as is well known, *the space of a thousand years*. The term, considered by itself, does not point to any *particular* period of that extent, but may be applied indifferently to any one of the five millenniums which have elapsed since the creation, to the sixth now

verging towards its close, or to the seventh, which is yet to come. But long-established usage has given the word a restricted application, and where it occurs without specification it is universally understood to refer to the period mentioned by the prophet of Patmos, Rev. 20. 1–7. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

This, it is to be observed, is the *only express passage* in the whole compass of the Scriptures, in which mention is made of the period of a thousand years in con-

nexion with the prospective lot of the church: consequently that which is emphatically styled *the doctrine of the Millennium* rests wholly and entirely upon the interpretation given of this portion of the Apocalypse. This period, the reader is aware, is considered by the mass of modern commentators and divines to be yet future. The degree of its proximity to our own times is variously estimated according to the peculiar hypotheses of different expositors in regard to the plan and structure of the book, and their several arrangements of its chronological eras.* Mr. Faber, with a large class of readers, fixes its commencement to the year 1866; the school of Messrs. Irving, Drummond, Begg, and others, are in daily expectation of the glorious personal epiphany of our Lord and Saviour coming in the clouds of heaven to put an end, by desolating judgments, to the present degenerate order of things within the bounds of Christendom, and to usher in the full splendour of the Millennial reign. Others again, forming a very respectable class of expositors, defer the commencing epoch of the Millennium to the year 2000, or thereabouts, that the period may coincide with

* "An *Epoch* is any fixed period of time from which a series of years may be regularly and successively computed. An *Era* is the series or succession of years actually so computed. Thus, for example, the period of the Birth of Christ constitutes *the Christian Epocha;* and the present year is the 1812th year of *the Christian Era*, or of the series of years computed from *the Christian Epocha.* It is the more necessary to observe this distinction, because we frequently find the terms *Era* and *Epoch* confounded even by some of our most eminent writers."—*Penn's Christian Survey; Introd.* Lond. 1812.

the seventh thousand years from the creation, constituting what may be termed the Great Sabbatism of the world. The following extracts from the writings of two distinguished advocates of this latter opinion may be considered as representing the sentiments of their class.

"Without taking upon me to name the precise year of the commencement of Antichrist's reign, shall I suppose it will have ceased and the Millennium commence about the two thousandth year of the Christian era? Should I say there appears a greater probability that the longed-for event will take place at that time than at the second period (1866) which has been mentioned, and the seventh thousand years of the world's existence prove a glorious sabbatic day of rest and peace and joy?—perhaps it would disappoint the ardent hope of its earlier approach which some fondly entertain; and I think I can perceive the disappointment expressed in your sorrowful looks. But if you view the subject with attention, there will be no cause either for disappointment or for grief, but infinitely much for gladness and rejoicing. You have not even the shadow of a reason for ceasing from your benevolent exertions in despondency, but the best and most forcible of reasons for proceeding in your endeavours to hasten on the glory of the latter days.—Let it be granted that nearly two hundred years must yet revolve before the Millennium begin, immense is the mass of labor which must, during that whole space, without intermission, be employed to bring it into existence. Eighteen centuries have already elapsed since

the coming of the Savior into the world, but in the two that are yet to come, more remains to be done than in all the eighteen which are past. The religion of Jesus in its purity is not yet even professed by a twentieth part of the inhabitants of the earth. Judge then what a Herculean labor it must be, in the space of two hundred years, to convert the other nineteen parts to the faith of Christ. Were we to be told, that for a long course of time, four millions of souls were annually brought to the knowledge of the truth, what a wonderful as well as what a delightful event we should conceive it to be! But on an average for near two centuries to come, more than this number must be converted every year, before the whole world can be brought into subjection to the Redeemer."—*Bogue's Diss. on the Mill.* p. 608, 8vo. ed.

"The Millennium must commence immediately upon the final overthrow of Papal Rome. But it was formerly shewn in its proper place that Papal Rome shall be completely overthrown in the end of the year of Christ 1999. The Millennium therefore, which both in the order of this prophecy and in the nature of the thing follows close upon the overthrow of Papal Rome, must commence in the beginning of the year of Christ 2000. On account of the prevalence of true religion and the total rest from wars in it, the Millennium is, as it were, the great sabbath of the whole earth."—*Johnston on the Rev.* vol. ii. p. 319.

These extracts are of great importance, not only as acquainting us with the views of their authors relative

to the commencement of this illustrious era, but as disclosing also the probable origin of the prevailing Millennarian hypothesis. *It is founded upon a Jewish tradition, according to which the six days employed in the creation of the world were each of them typical of a thousand years, and the rest of the seventh a prefiguration of the great sabbatical Millennary of the world.* Daubuz, by far the ablest of all commentators on the visions of John, thus speaks of the origin of the Apocalyptic Millennium:—"It may be observed, that as the Jewish church had no absolute rest or sabbatism as the Millennium is, so the Holy Ghost could not derive the symbol from that economy, but was as it were obliged to draw it from an higher fountain, or original of ideal types and events. But, however, even this original idea was known to the Jews. They had a tradition of it, and the notion was current even before St. John wrote. He has not then treated of the Millennium as a new thing, but has described it in some measure by the old notions with improvements: and besides that, showed us how it is accomplished by Christ, by giving us a full account of the antecedents and consequents. Now that tradition was grounded upon the allegorical exposition of the creation of the world in six days, and the rest of God in the seventh; and that a thousand years are with God as one day. Whence it is argued, that as God created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh, so he will redeem mankind and work out their redemption in six thousand years, and procure his and their sabbatism in the seventh thousand: this rest being to be proportionable to the dura-

tion of the work. By consequence, that term of *one thousand years* is to be taken in a literal sense, and must consist just of a thousand years in the common acceptation of the word; and needs no further evolution, as some of late have pretended, because it is fixed by that traditional allegory. Now that the Jews had it must be plain from this, that we find it in St. Barnabas, who wrote before St. John many years. And indeed we give very good reasons in our Commentary to think that the notion is as old as the Deluge, because we find it pretty plainly to be also the tradition of the Chaldean Magi, and perhaps too of the Egyptians."—*Daubuz, Perpet. Comment. on the Rev.* p. 64. 1720.

Before proceeding to adduce evidence of the existence of this tradition among the Jews, the reader will permit us to introduce another citation showing still more distinctly the use which is made by Christian writers of the above-mentioned allegory.

"Through the whole Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, there is a striking typical representation of some great and important Sabbath, as a great septenary that has not yet taken place, and which evidently appears to be the Millennarian septenary, as the great Sabbath of the whole earth. Thus, Gen. 2. 3. 'God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.' Ex. 20. 8–11. The appointment of the seventh day as the weekly sabbath was renewed in a most solemn manner. Levit. 25. 1–7. Every seventh year was appointed a sabbatical year; and Levit. 25. 8, 9. the commencement of the year of jubilee, which was every fiftieth

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CHAPTER IV.

THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF THE MILLENNIUM STATED AND CONFIRMED.

The Connection of the twentieth Chapter of the Revelation with the preceding portions of the Book stated—The Identity of the Dragon throughout the Apocalypse maintained—The Binding of the Dragon explained—Its date determined—Confirmed by History—Particulars of the symbolic Imagery further elucidated—Symbol of the Bottomless Pit or Abyss explained—Opinions of Lightfoot, Turretin, Mastricht, and Marck quoted—Satan's deceiving the Nations explained—Whether the Millennium to consist of a thousand literal years—Explication of the Thrones, and of the Souls of the Martyrs seen in the Vision, and of their Living and Reigning with Christ a thousand years 138

Thus they say; 'In the time to come, which is in the last days,—on the sixth day, which is the sixth millennium, when the Messiah comes,—for the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years.' Again, 'The sixth degree is called the sixth day; the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years.' So they call the Sabbath or seventh day the seventh millennium, and interpret "the song for the Sabbath-day," Ps. 92. a title for the seventh millennium, for one day of the blessed God is a thousand years.' To which agrees the tradition of Elias, which runs thus: 'Tis the tradition of the house of Elias that the world shall be (endure) six thousand years, two thousand void (of the law); two thousand years the law; and two thousand years the days of the Messiah;' for they suppose that the six days of creation were expressive of the six thousand years which the world will stand, and that the seventh day prefigures the last millennium, in which will be the day of judgment and the world to come; 'for the six days, say they, is a sign or intimation of these things: on the sixth day man was created, and on the seventh the work was finished; so the kings of the nations of the world (continue) five millenniums, answering to the five days in which were created the fowls, and the creeping things of the water, and other things; and the enjoyment of their kingdom is a little in the sixth, answerable to the creation of the beasts and living creatures created at this time in the beginning of it; and the kingdom of the house of David is in the sixth millennium, answerable to the creation of man, who knew his Creator and ruled over them all; and in the end of that millennium will

be the day of judgment, answerable to man, who was judged in the end; and the seventh is the Sabbath, and it is the beginning of the world to come."—*Gill on* 2 Pet. 3. 8.

"This solemnity (the year of release) as some conjecture was a shadow of that everlasting Sabbath expected in the heavens. And this is supposed to be the foundation of the opinion of a learned Rabbi, who asserts that the world should continue for six thousand years; but the seventh thousand should be the great sabbatical year: the six thousand answering to the six working days of the week, and the seventh to the Sabbath. His words are, Six thousand years the world shall be, and again it shall be destroyed; two thousand shall be void, two thousand under the law, and two thousand under the Messiah. *The substance of this opinion is certainly to be rejected as too curious;* yet since it was delivered by a Jew, it may serve to prove against them that the Messiah is already come, and that the law of Moses ceased at his coming."—*Lewis's Heb. Antiq.* vol. ii. p. 611.

"As for the general reason on which the law concerning the sabbatical year was grounded, it was no doubt partly political and civil, to prevent the land from being worn out by continual tilling; partly religious, to afford the poor and labouring people more leisure one year in seven to attend to devotional exercises; and partly mystical, typifying that spiritual rest which Christ will give to all who come unto him. Some, both Jews and Christians, make the sabbatical year to be typical of the Millennium. For as the law consecrates the

seventh day and the seventh year, they conclude the world will last six thousand years in the state in which we now see it; or, as Rab. Elias in the Talmud expresses it, two thousand years without the law, two thousand under the law, and two thousand under the Messiah; after which comes the grand Sabbath of one thousand years. This notion, *though it be perhaps without any sufficient ground*, might be improved into an argument *ad hominem* to convince the Jews that the Messiah must be already come, since the world has gone far more than half-way through the last two thousand years of the six thousand allowed by their tradition; for its continuance during which period therefore, if at all, must be the reign of the Messiah."—*Jennings' Jewish Antiq.* vol. ii. p. 293.

"We cannot but reckon it an instance of unwarrantable presumption in several Jewish writers, and some of the fathers after them, to suppose as they do, that the world shall continue six thousand years from the creation, and that as it was made in six days, and the seventh ordained to be a Sabbath, this had a mystical signification, and accordingly in its application to this matter, a day answers to a thousand years; or, that as the world was two thousand years without the written word or law of God, and after that two thousand years under the law, so the days of the Messiah shall continue two thousand years, and then follows the eternal Sabbatism at Christ's second coming. As for the Jews who speak of this matter, their unbelief is condemned out of their own mouths, since they do as it were concede that the time in which the Messiah was to come, was

that in which he actually appeared. Notwithstanding this is a groundless conjecture so far as it respects the end of the world, and indeed it is an entering into a secret which is altogether hid from mankind."—*Ridgley's Body of Div. Quest.* 56. vol. ii. p. 505.

" Of the Jewish writers Rabbi Ketina, as cited in the Gemara, or gloss of their Talmud, said that 'the world endures six thousand years, and one thousand it shall be laid waste (that is, the enemies of God shall be destroyed) whereof it is said, Is. 2. 11. *The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.* Tradition assents to Rabbi Ketina: 'As out of seven years every seventh is the year of remission, so out of the seven thousand years of the world the seventh millennary shall be the millennary of remission, that *God alone may be exalted in that day.*'—(The tradition of the house of Elias above cited is then given, after which it is added)—" It was also the tradition of the house of Elias, that 'the just whom God shall raise up (meaning in the first resurrection) shall not be turned again into dust. Now if you inquire how it shall be with the just in these thousand years wherein the holy blessed God shall renew this world, whereof it is said, *And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day*, you must know that the holy blessed God will give them the wings as it were of eagles that they may fly upon the face of the waters; whence it is said, Ps. 46. 2. *Therefore will we not fear when the earth shall be changed.* But perhaps you will say, it shall be a pain and affliction to them. Not at all, for it is said, Is. 40. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with*

wings as eagles."—Newton on the Proph. p. 588, ed. in one vol.

Upon these quotations, which might be indefinitely multiplied from the Rabbinical writers, it may be observed;

(1.) That the tradition recited appears to be rightly regarded *as* a tradition, and nothing more. We do not find that it rests upon any express declaration of the inspired scriptures of the Old Testament, the only portion of the sacred volume to which an appeal would be made by a Jew. As far, moreover, as we are able to discover the origin of the tradition, it is to be traced up to one Elias; but who he was, when he lived, and what might have been his claims to the prophetic character, we are left in utter ignorance. We know, indeed, that some later advocates of the opinion have maintained, that he was no other than the Elias or Elijah of the Scriptures, who lived in the reign of Ahab, but they have never, we believe, advanced a particle of proof in support of the affirmation. It unquestionably comes to us, therefore, as a mere traditionary legend, which every one is at liberty to adopt or reject as he pleases. It is accompanied by no *external* credentials which should entitle it to any higher rank in our estimation, than the thousand idle conceits and puerile glosses of the Talmudical annotators. The propensity of the Jewish writers to mystic and allegorizing interpretation is well known, and in the present instance their exposition of the Mosaic history of the creation savors strongly of the dreams of the Cabala. At the same time, it is but fair to admit that, as there is nothing in the Scriptures which directly

contradicts it, the tradition *may* be well founded. It has, perhaps, more of an air of *internal* probability than most of the Rabbinic fancies which have laid a tax upon human credulity. The use of the number *seven* in the sacred volume is certainly remarkable, and cannot but be admitted in many cases to possess a mystical import. It is by no means impossible that it may be so in the present instance. At any rate, we are disposed to treat with respect an opinion which has been for ages in vogue among the pious, though it may lack that degree of evidence, on the score of origin and authority, which should entitle it to a place among the articles of our faith. We are not, therefore, prepared to class among the vagaries and hallucinations of Jewish conceit the interpretation in question. All that we affirm is, that it is not, and cannot be, authoritative. But,

(2.) Even on the supposition that this allegorical exposition is founded in truth, it does not follow that the sabbatical millennary of the Judaic tradition is the same with the thousand years of the Apocalypse. The identifying them is certainly a gratuitous assumption. For ought that appears to the contrary, though it should be granted that a sevenfold series of chiliads is destined to measure this world's duration, the Millennium of John may coincide with some other of the number than the seventh. The very point, therefore, which of all others stood most in need of confirmation is fortified with the least. So little countenance does the doctrine of a Christian Millennium *yet future* receive from the uncertain dogma of a grand concluding Sabbath of the world.

That there was, however, an early transfusion or in-

corporation of this feature of Judaism into the Christianity of the primitive fathers, will be evident from the following testimonies collected from their writings. Nor should this be matter of surprise when it is considered that many of the first Christians were by birth Jews, who had been trained up in all the distinctive peculiarities of the Mosaic economy, and were, like Paul, 'exceedingly zealous of the traditions of their fathers.' It was natural therefore that they should endeavour to harmonize the prophetic announcements of the New Testament as far as possible with the views which they had imbibed from Jewish sources of the later destinies of the church and the world. Their sentiments, accordingly, were deeply tinctured with the hue of those preconceptions which they brought with them from the synagogues and schools of their early education. From them the opinion would naturally be propagated among the gentile converts. Of this we shall hope to lay conclusive evidence before the minds of our readers.

Of the Christian writers of the first century, who allude to this subject, Barnabas in his epistle speaks thus:

"'And God made in six days the works of his hands, and he finished them on the seventh day, and he rested in it, and sanctified it.' Consider, children, what that signifies, *he finished them in six days*. This it signifies, that the Lord God will finish all things in six thousand years. For a day with him is a thousand years; as he himself testifieth, saying, 'Behold this day shall be as a thousand years.' Therefore, children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, shall all things be consummated. *And he rested the seventh day:* this

signifies, that when his Son shall come, and shall abolish the season of the wicked one (Antichrist), and shall change the sun and the moon and the stars, then he shall rest gloriously in that seventh day."*

The genuineness of this epistle is indeed disputed; but as far as the present argument is concerned, it is immaterial who the real author was. There is sufficient testimony that it is the production of a very early period of the Christian church, and it contains undeniable evidence of the origin of those opinions which were in circulation respecting an expected reign of a thousand years, or a seventh millennium.

Justin Martyr, in the second century, declares the Millennium to be the Catholic doctrine of his time.

"I, and as many as are orthodox Christians in all respects, do acknowledge that there shall be a resurrection of the flesh, and a residence of a thousand years in Jerusalem rebuilt, and adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel, and Isaiah, and others do unanimously attest."†

But here Justin's proof, if proof it can be called, is exceedingly deficient; for the prophets referred to say

* —Καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἓξ ἡμέραις τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν αὐτου, καὶ συνετέλεσεν ἐν τῇ ημέρᾳ τῇ εβδόμῃ, καὶ κατέπαυσεν ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν. Προσέχετε, τέκνα, τί λέγει, τὸ συνετέλεσεν ἐν ἓξ ἡμεραις τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι συντελεῖ ὁ Θεὸς κύριος ἐν ἑξακισχιλιόις ἔτεσι τὰ πάντα. Ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα παρ' αὐτῳ χίλια ἔτη, αὐτος δε μαρτυρεῖ, λέγων, ἰδοὺ σήμερον ἡμέρα ἔσται ὡς χίλια ἐτη. Οὐκοῦν, τέκνα, ἐν ἓξ ἡμεραις, ἐν ἑξακισχιλιόις ἔτεσι, συντελεσθήσεται τὰ πάντα. Καὶ κατέπαυσε τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ εβδόμῃ· τοῦτολέγει, ὅταν ελθων ὁ ὑιὸς αυτοῦ, καὶ καταργήσει τὸν καιρὸν ἀνόμου, και κρινεῖ τους ασεβεῖς, καὶ αλλάξει τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ την σεληνὴν, καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας, τότε καλῶς κατεπαύσεται ἐν τῇ ἡμερᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ.—*S. Barn. Epist.* c. 15.

† Ἐγω δὲ, καὶ εἲ τινές εἰσιν ὀρθογνώμονες κατὰ πάντα Χριστιανοι, και σαρκὸς ανάστασιν γενήσεσθαι ἐπιστάμεθα, και χίλια ἔτη εν Ἱεροσαλὴμ οἰκοδομηθείση, και κοσμηθείση, και πλατυνθείση, (ὡς) οἱ προφῆται Ἰεζεκιὴλ, και Ἡσαιας, και οἱ ἄλλοι ὁμολογοῦσιν.—*Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 313.

nothing respecting the period of a thousand years, so that his expectation, as far as it relates to a limited term of years, clearly betrays its Jewish original.—He afterwards subjoins:—

"A certain man among us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, did prophesy that the faithful believers in Christ should live a thousand years in the New Jerusalem, and after these should be the general resurrection and judgment."*

In the order of time Irenæus is the next authority who is particularly entitled to attention.

"In whatever number of days the world was created, in the same number of thousands of years it will come to an end. And therefore the Scripture says, that the heavens and the earth were completed and all their embellishments. And God finished on the sixth day the works which he made. And God ceased on the seventh day from all his works. This is a narration of the past, and a prophecy relative to the future; for the day of the Lord is as a thousand years."†

Cyprian speaks thus;—

"Thus in the divine arrangement of the world seven

* Ἀνήρ τις, ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωάννης, εἷς τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐν ἀποκαλύψει γενόμενῃ αὐτῷ χίλια ἔτη ποιήσειν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ τοὺς τῷ ἡμετέρῳ Χριστῷ πιστεύσαντας προεφήτευσε, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν καθολικὴν καὶ, συνελόντι φάναι, αἰωνίαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἅμα πάντων ἀνάστασιν γενήσεσθαι καὶ κρίσιν.—Ibid. p. 315.

† Ὅσαις ἡμέραις ἐγένετο ὁ κόσμος, τοσαῦτοι χιλιονταὶ συντελεῖται· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο φησὶν ἡ γραφή· καὶ συντελέσθησαν ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, καὶ πᾶς ὁ κοσμος αὐτῶν· καὶ συνετέλεσεν ὁ Θεὸς τῇ ἡμερᾳ τῇ ϛ' τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἃ ἐποιησε, καὶ κατέπαυσε ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμερᾳ τῇ ζ' ἀπο πάντων τῶν ἐργῶν αὐτοῦ. Τοῦτο δ' ἐστι τῶν προγεγονότων διήγησις, καὶ τῶν ἐσομένων προφετεια· ἡ γαρ ἡ μέρα Κυρίου ὡς χιλια ἔτη.—Irenæus Adv. Hæreses, L. 5. p. 444, 445.

days were at first employed, and in them seven thousand years were included."*

The next testimony is taken from Tertullian.

"After a thousand years, within which period the resurrection of the saints is included, who will rise sooner or later according to their services, then we being changed to angelic natures shall be transferred into a celestial kingdom."†

The following is from Lactantius.

"Since in six days the works of God were all completed, so through six ages, that is, through six thousand years, the world must remain in its present state. And again, since when his works were all perfected he rested on the seventh day and blessed it, so at the end of six thousand years all wickedness must be banished from the earth, and righteousness reign for a thousand years."‡

But although there was a signal agreement among the ancient fathers as to the period of the world to which the Apocalyptic millennium was to be assigned,

* Prima dispositione divina septem dies annorum septem millia continentes.—*Cypr. De Exhort. Mart.* c. 11.

† Post mille annos intra quam aetatem includitur sanctorum resurrectio pro meritis maturins vel tardius resurgentium; tunc demutati in atomo in angelicam substantiam transferemur in cœleste regnum.—*Tertull. Adv. Marcion*, L. 3. c. 24.

‡ Quoniam sex diebus cuncta Dei opera perfecta sunt; per secula sex, id est, annorum sex millia manero in hoc statu mundum necesso est. Et rursus quoniam perfectis operibus requievit die septimo eumque benedixit; necesse est ut in fine sexti millesimi anni malitia omnis abolatur e terra ot regnot per annos mille justitia.—*Lactantius*, L. 7. c. 14.

there was a marked diversity of opinion as to the real *character* of the period itself. There were in fact in that age, as there are in modern times, two distinct classes of chiliasts, the *literal* and the *spiritual*, or, as they have been termed, the *gross* and the *refined*. By the one party, the anticipation was confidently cherished of the personal reign of Christ on earth, of the literal resurrection of the martyred saints, of the rebuilding of the temple and city of Jerusalem, of the reinhabitation of the land of Israel by its ancient occupants, and of the investiture of all the risen righteous with a kingly pre-eminence over the remnant nations of the globe. They held, moreover, that this halcyon era should be distinguished by an unprecedented fertility of the earth, which should teem with the utmost profusion of the treasures of its bosom, and accumulate without measure the elements of every sensual and corporeal delight. 'The earth,' says Lactantius, 'shall disclose its exuberance, the labour of tillage shall be unnecessary to secure the most abundant harvests, the rocks of the mountains shall sweat with honey, wine shall run down in streams, and the rivers flow with milk.'* In a word, their anticipated millennium, if we may judge from the letter of the strong language in which it is described, was but another name for an Epicurean heaven. Still it is but fair to admit, that some allowance is perhaps to be made on the score of the highly figured and luxuri-

* Terra vero aperiet fœcunditatem suam, et uberrimas frugos sua spirito genorabit: rupes montium melle sudabunt, per rivos vina decurrent, et flumina lacte inundabunt.—*Lactantius*, L. 7. c. 24.

ating style which they were led to employ in portraying the felicities of their expected kingdom. *They* possibly might have disclaimed the very gross and carnal interpretation which their opponents put upon their language, although after every abatement on this score, an ample residuum of wild extravagance remains to characterize their hypothesis. Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Lactantius, are ranked among the leading abetters of this opinion. Bishop Bull, unwilling to give up these venerated names to the opprobrium of being numbered on the side of so foul a heresy, kindly endeavours to throw the veil of a lenient and charitable construction over the most repulsive features of their system. Speaking of an expression which Justin Martyr ascribes to Trypho, viz. 'That it is given to him (Jesus Christ) to judge all men without exception, and that his kingdom is eternal,' he remarks; "I think that this clause, 'Of whose kingdom there shall be no end,' was directed against the Cerinthians, who taught, that those magnificent things which are mentioned in the Scriptures concerning the kingdom of Christ, are to be understood of an earthly, carnal, and Epicurean reign, during a thousand years. There were, indeed, in the first age after the apostles, many even of the orthodox, among whom was Justin, whom I have a little before been praising, who expected a kingdom of Christ on earth for a thousand years. But their opinion, though perhaps erroneous, was as distant as possible from the Cerinthian heresy; for those orthodox Christians were very far from believing that the felicity of this kingdom consisted in meats and drinks and mar-

riages; which, as Dionysius of Alexandria informs us, was the impure and sordid opinion of Cerinthus. But they expected a kingdom of Christ, in which peace would flourish, in which truth, and righteousness, and piety would prevail, and the sacred name of God be every where celebrated with deserved praise. Then the orthodox hoped for a temporary kingdom of Christ, only as a prelude (if I may so express myself) to his celestial kingdom, which they believed would endure through everlasting ages."* Lardner, in like manner, endeavours to retrieve the credit of Cerinthus himself.†

The Anti-millennarians, on the other hand, though they looked equally with the others for an ulterior state of transcendant prosperity and glory to the people of God, yet they strenuously maintained that the passages of holy writ which announced it, were to be *allegorically* interpreted. Thus says Origen; "Those who deny the millennium are Οι τροπολογουντες τα προφητικα—*those who interpret the sayings of the prophets by a trope.*"‡ Those, on the contrary, who maintained it, are styled *solius literæ discipuli,—disciples of the letter only.* The first, says he, assert '*horum vim figuraliter intelligi debere,—the import of these things ought to be figuratively understood;*' the others, he adds, understand the scripture, "*Judaico sensu,—after the manner of the Jews.*"§ So Epiphanius, speaking of the notion of the millennium maintained by Apollinarius, says, "There

* *Bulli Judicium Eccl. Cath.* c. 6. p. 55.

† *Lardner's Works*, vol. ii. p. 701. Lond. 1829.

‡ Περι αρχων, L. 2. c. 12.

§ *Ibid.*

is indeed a millennium mentioned by John, but the majority of pious men look upon those words as true indeed, but to be taken in a spiritual sense."* The advocates of a spiritual interpretation accordingly received from the opposite party the appellation of *allegorists*, and Nepos, a defender of the millennarian theory, entitled his work Ελεγχος των αλληγοριστων,—*a refutation of the allegorists*. Of these tropical expositors Irenæus says, "I am not ignorant that some among us who believe, in divers nations and by various works, and who, believing, do consent with the just, do yet endeavour, (μεταφερειν) *to turn these things into metaphors*. But if some have attempted to allegorise these things, they have not been found in all things consistent with themselves, and may be confuted from the words themselves."†

We perceive, however, an equal positiveness in the deniers of what they deemed a voluptuous millennium. Gennadius says, "In the divine promises we believe nothing concerning meat and drink, as Irenæus, Tertullian, and Lactantius teach from their author Papias, nor of the reign of a thousand years of Christ on earth after the resurrection, and the saints reigning deliciously with him, as Nepos taught."‡

* —ἀληθῆ μὲν ὄντα, εν βαθύτητι δὲ σαφηνιζόμενα πεπιστεύκασιν.—Epiph. Hær. 77. § 26, p. 1031.

† *Irenæus Adv. Hær.* L. 5. c. 33.

‡ Non quod ad cibum vel ad potum pertinet sicut, Papia auctore, Irenæus, Tertullianus, et Lactantius acquiescunt, neque (per) mille annos post resurrectionem regnum Christi in terra futurum, et sanctos cum illo in deliciis regnaturos speramus, sicut Nepos edocuit.—*Gennad. Eccl. Dogmat.* c. 55.

Augustin also observes of this opinion, "That it might be tolerable if they mentioned any spiritual delights which the saints might enjoy by Christ's presence; but since they affirm that they who then rise shall enjoy carnal and immoderate banquets of meat and drink without modesty, these things can only be believed by carnal men."*

Origen moreover speaks of this opinion, "As a wicked doctrine, a reproach to Christianity, the heathens themselves having better sentiments than these."† And Eusebius says of it, "That it took its rise from Papias, a man of slender judgment; but the antiquity of the man prevailed with many of the ecclesiastics to be of that opinion, particularly with Irenæus, and if there were any other of the same judgment with him."‡

But of all the ancients the most inveterate oppugner of the millennarian conceit was Jerome.

"If," says he, "we understand the Revelation literally, we must judaize; if spiritually, as it is written, we shall seem to contradict many of the ancients, particularly the Latins, Tertullian, Victorinus, Lactantius; and the Greeks likewise, especially Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, against whom Dionysius, bishop of the church of Alexandria, a man of uncommon eloquence, wrote a curious piece deriding the fable of a thousand years,

* Sed cum eos qui tunc resurrexerint dicunt immoderatissimis carnalibus epulis vacaturos, in quibus cibus sit tantus et potus, ut non solum nullam modestiam teneant, sed modum quoque ipsius incredulitatis excedant, nullo modo ista possunt nisi de carnalibus, credi.—*August. De Civ. Dec.* L. 20. c. 7.

† *Prolegomena to the Canticles.*

‡ *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* L. 3. c. 39.

and the terrestrial Jerusalem adorned with gold and precious stones; rebuilding the temple, bloody sacrifices, sabbatical rest, circumcision, marriages, lyings-in, nursing of children, dainty feasts, and servitude of the nations: and again after this, wars, armies, triumphs, and slaughters of conquered enemies, and the death of the sinner a hundred years old. Him Apollinarius answered in two volumes, whom not only men of his own sect, but most of our own people likewise follow in this point. So it is no hard matter to foresee what a multitude of persons I am like to displease."*

Of the Dionysius here mentioned Lardner says, "In the time of Dionysius's episcopate there were great numbers of Christians in the district of Arsinoe in Egypt, who were fond of the millennary notion, expecting a kingdom of Christ here on earth in which

* —et qua ratione intelligenda sit Apocalypsis Johannis, quam si juxta literam accipimus, Judaizandum est; si spiritualiter, ut scripta est, disserimus, multorum veterum opinionibus contraire, Latinorum, Tertulliani, Victorini, Lactantii; Graecorum, ut cæteros prætermittam, Irenæi tantum Lugdunensis episcopi faciam mentionem; adversus quem vir eloquentissimus Dionysius, Alexandrinæ ecclesiæ pontifex, elegantem scribit librum, irridens mille annorum fabulam; et auream atque gemmatam in terris Jerusalem; instaurationem templi; hostiarum sanguinem; otium Sabbati; circumcisionis injuriam, nuptias, partus, liberorum educationem, epularum delicias, et cunctarum gentium servitatem: rursus bella, exercitus, ac triumphos, et superatorum neces, mortemque centinarii peccatoris. Cui duobus voluminibus respondit Apollinarius, quem non solum suæ sectæ homines, sed et nostrorum in hac parte duntaxat plurima sequitur multitudo; ut præsaga mente jam cernam, quantorum in me rabies concitanda sit.—*Hieron. in Es. l.* 18. *in Proem.* p. 477, 478. Ed. Bened.

men should enjoy sensual pleasures. These persons were much confirmed in this opinion by a book of Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, entitled, A Confutation of the Allegorists. Dionysius had a disputation or conference with those Christians, which he gave an account of in one of his books, written upon that subject. In a fragment which we have in Eusebius, he writes to this purpose: 'When,' says he, 'I was in the province of Arsinoe, where you know this opinion has for some time so far prevailed as to cause divisions and apostacies of whole churches, having called together the presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the villages, admitting likewise as many of the brethren as pleased to be present, I advised that this opinion should publicly be examined into. And when they produced to me that book as a shield and impregnable bulwark, I sat with them three whole days successively, from morning to evening, discussing the contents of it.' He then goes on highly applauding the good order of the dispute, the moderation and candour of all present, their willingness to be convinced, and to retract their former opinions, if reason so required: 'With a good conscience,' says he, 'and unfeignedly, and with hearts open to the sight of God, embracing whatever could be made out by good arguments from the holy scriptures. In the end, Coracio, the chief defender of that opinion, engaged and promised, in the presence of all the brethren, that he would no longer maintain nor defend, nor teach, nor make mention of it, as being fully convinced by the arguments on the contrary side. And all the brethren

who were present rejoiced for the conference, and their mutual reconciliation and agreement.'"*

In connexion with this we shall append, as a curious relic of antiquity, the judgment of this same Dionysius respecting the book of Revelation. After observing that many had rejected the book as a forgery of Cerinthus, and consequently not entitled to a place in the sacred canon, he adds:—"For this (they say) was one of his particular notions, that the kingdom of Christ should be earthly; consisting of those things which he himself, a carnal and sensual man, most admired, the pleasures of the belly, and of concupiscence; that is, eating, and drinking, and marriage; and for the more decent procurement of these, feastings, and sacrifices, and slaughters of victims. But, for my part, I dare not reject the book, since many of the brethren have it in high esteem: but allowing it to be above my understanding, I suppose it to contain throughout some latent and wonderful meaning; for though I do not understand it, I suspect there must be some profound sense in the words; not measuring and judging these things by my own reason, but ascribing more to faith. I esteem them too sublime to be comprehended by me. Nor do I condemn what I have not been able to understand: but I admire the more, because they are above my reach."†

This is probably a very correct account of the light in which the great mass of the Christian world at the present day view the disclosures (to them, mysteries) of this amazing book, notwithstanding that the Holy Ghost,

* Lardner's Works, vol. ii. p. 691.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 693.

from a foresight of the disesteem into which it would be likely, in after ages, to fall, has, as a prophylactic guarantee against neglect, emblazoned in characters of light upon the very portals of this temple of prophecy the inscription—'BLESSED IS HE THAT READETH,'—a declaration equivalent to an asterisk of heaven pointing to the vast importance and inestimable value of this portion of the sacred oracles.* This importance, as per-

* "If that portion of the Bible which has been denominated the Revelation of St. John the Divine, and which as such has been regarded and acknowledged for seventeen hundred years, can be proved to the satisfaction of the public to be a spurious composition, let it be separated from the Book of God. Or, if any person can satisfy himself that the whole production is an invention of man, let him place it on a level with the Fables of Æsop, and regard them with similar indifference. But on the contrary, if the Revelation of St. John has come from the archives of heaven, if it has been issued from the throne of God, if our Lord Jesus Christ, out of his tender regard for the interests of his people, and his concern for their instruction and encouragement, has condescended to unseal the volume containing the destinies of the Church and the world,—is there any Christian who can suppose that indifference to the Revelation of Jesus Christ himself can be unattended with criminality? Especially can it be supposed, that the indifference of a minister of religion can be free from a charge of guilt? Is he not constituted a steward of the mysteries of God? And ought he not to endeavour to explain those mysteries to the people under his care? If it be said, that the predictions of the Revelation are obscure, and that the difficulties and uncertainties which present themselves render every attempt at explanation an unprofitable occupation: the difficulty experienced ought to operate as a reason for paying more attention to scriptural expressions, revealing divine purposes relative to the future, and for making a more diligent investigation to ascertain the import of the words of God. Besides, he that

taining to the Apocalypse in itself considered, good men, who venerate the word of God, are generally willing to concede, but this concession is in effect vacated by the secret prevailing belief that its contents are unintelligible. Alas!

> "Our doubts are traitors,
> And make us lose the good we oft might win,
> By fearing to attempt."

From the copious citations adduced above from the records of ecclesiastical antiquity, it is clear that the Millennarian hypothesis, in its literal and less refined features, did obtain an early prevalence in the church. As little, we think, is to be doubted, that the opinion owes its origin to a Jewish source. To what extent it actually prevailed among the primitive Christians, it is not possible, perhaps, from the conflicting testimonies of opposite schools, to determine with any degree of

reads and those that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep them, are pronounced blessed; and should not this assurance be an encouragement and incentive to study that portion of Scripture which unfolds to us the future fortunes of the Church? Have we no ambition, no desire, no inclination to aim at and attain the promised blessedness? Need I remind the reader of the awful denunciation, with which the Redeemer himself closes the revelation he had made to his servant John? 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.'" *New Illustrations of Prophecy, by W. Vint*, p. 273, 274. Lond. 1831.

accuracy. The probability is, that during the three first centuries it was very extensively embraced. We recollect that Chillingworth prefers it as a very serious charge against the church of Rome, which lays such lofty claims to the perpetuation within her own bosom of the pure unadulterated doctrines of the apostolic and primitive ages, that in this matter if in no other she has grossly falsified the creed of antiquity, inasmuch as there is ample evidence that the doctrine of the chiliasts was actually the catholic faith of more than one century. And certainly there are few judges more competent to pronounce upon the fact. At the same time we do not regard the extent of its prevalence, or the period of its duration, as any measure of the abstract truth of the tenet. For ourselves we can easily conceive that, although the doctrine were really unsupported by Scripture, there were circumstances in the case of the primitive believers which may have contributed powerfully to the spread and influence of Millennarianism among them. The early days of the church, it is well known, were the days of persecution. The first converts to Christianity were 'compassed about by a great fight of afflictions.' The espousal of the religion of the cross, which waged an exterminating war against the standing superstitions of the empire, exposed them, as a matter of course, to all the terrors of popular frenzy and of imperial indignation. Being for the most part men of uncultivated minds, but of ardent zeal, unequal to the task of a sublimated conception of the spiritual mysteries of revelation, but laying firm hold of its literal and palpable representations, and

deeply imbued with its divine spirit, the *grosser* forms of prophetic truth were precisely such as they would naturally be most prone to imbibe, and such too as were best suited to their exigencies. Even though we suppose their views erroneous, yet the error was in itself an innocent one, and with the fires of martyrdom kindling around them, and every species of torture devised to aggravate their sufferings, what could buoy up the spirits of such a class of men in the hour of mortal agony, but the promises and prospects of a glorious reward such as their rude and simple but honest minds saw disclosed in the letter of their Scriptures? And is it any disparagement to the wisdom of the Most High that he should so have framed the word of truth that certain portions of it might be susceptible of an interpretation which, though natural, was not necessary, though fallacious, was yet feasible, and adapted to minister at particular seasons and under peculiar circumstances, the most solid support and consolation to its disciples? For ourselves we have no difficulty in supposing that the Millennarian error was in a peculiar manner *winked at* in the early ages of Christianity, and that the belief of it was calculated to produce and did produce results of a most auspicious character, which under the circumstances a different and even a more correct construction of the sacred oracles would have failed to effect. On the same principle, in all probability, we may account for the general prevalence at that early period of the sentiment respecting the speedy dissolution of the world and the consummation of all things. "In the primitive church," says Gibbon, "the

influence of truth was very powerfully strengthened by an opinion, which, however it may deserve respect for its usefulness and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience. It was universally believed that the end of the world, and the kingdom of heaven, were at hand. The near approach of this wonderful event had been predicted by the apostles; the tradition of it was preserved by their earliest disciples, and those who understood in their literal sense the discourses of Christ himself, were obliged to expect the second and glorious coming of the Son of man in the clouds, before that generation was totally extinguished, which had beheld his humble condition, and which might still be witness of the calamities of the Jews under Vespasian or Hadrian. The revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation; *but as long as, for wise purposes, this error was permitted to subsist in the church it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians*, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itself, and all the various race of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their divine Judge."* Can it be doubted that the language of the sacred writers is so constructed, as that it should, before the event proved the contrary, tend to countenance and cherish the belief here stated? When we hear the apostles saying, 'The end of all things is at hand'—'we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air'

* Decl. and Fall, p. 185. Ed. in one vol.

—'lo, I come quickly'—'the time is at hand'—'things which must shortly come to pass'—it is obvious that such expressions, to say nothing of our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, which might be thought to include the destruction of the world, are capable of being construed in a sense to warrant the most sanguine expectations that were built upon them. And who shall say that this end might not have been expressly designed under God to be answered by the peculiar phraseology in which the announcements were couched? For aught we know, in fact, the apostles themselves might have been of the prevailing belief, as we have met with no reasoning which convinces us that they always understood the full reach and import of their own writings.

Here it may be objected, that it is not altogether consistent to attribute to the primitive Christians the belief in the speedy catastrophe of the world, when at the same time their millennarian notions required them to hold that six thousand years must first elapse before that blissful period would dawn upon the earth. But the truth is, that, owing to a radical error in their chronological calculus, they conceived themselves as actually having arrived at the eve of the world's seventh millennary, or, in other words, as having their lot cast on the Saturday of the great antypical Week of the creation. "The primitive church of Antioch," says the historian above cited, "computed almost 6000 years from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ. Africanus, Lactantius, and the Greek church, have reduced that number to 5,500, and Eusebius has con-

tented himself with 5,200 years. These calculations were formed on the Septuagint, which was universally received during the first six centuries."*

Before leaving the subject of ancient testimonies, the reader will tolerate another extract from the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, couched in the usual flowing and eloquent vein of the author. "The ancient and popular doctrine of the millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years. By the same analogy it was inferred, that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection. So pleasing was this hope to the mind of believers, that the *New Jerusalem*, the seat of this blissful kingdom, was quickly adorned with all the gayest colours of the imagination. A felicity consisting only of pure and spiritual pleasure would have appeared too refined for its inhabitants, who were still supposed to possess their human nature and senses. A garden of Eden, with the amusements of the pastoral life, was no longer suited to the advanced state of society which prevailed

* Decl. and Fall, p. 185.

under the Roman empire. A city was therefore erected of gold and precious stones, and a supernatural plenty of corn and wine was bestowed on the adjacent territory; in the free enjoyment of whose spontaneous productions, the happy and benevolent people was never to be restrained by any jealous laws of exclusive property. The assurance of such a millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenæus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine. Though it might not be universally received, it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers; and it seems so well adapted to the desires and apprehensions of mankind, that it must have contributed in a very essential degree to the progress of the Christian faith. But when the edifice of the church was almost completed, the temporary support was laid aside. The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism."*

* Decl. and Fall, p. 185, 186.

CHAPTER II.

MODERN OPINIONS RESPECTING THE APOCALYPTIC MILLENNIUM.

Historical Sketch of the Decline of the Millennarian theory, and of its Revival at the Reformation—The modern Advocates of a future Millennium divided into two Classes—The first hold to the personal Reign of Christ on earth during the thousand years—Mede, Caryll, Gill, Noel, Irving, Anderson, quoted—Claim to found their Expectation upon a passage in the second Epistle of Peter—Remarks upon this Interpretation—The second Class deny the Personal, but maintain the Spiritual Reign of Christ—Confirmed by Extracts from Whitby, Bogue, Johnston.

THE Millennarian hypothesis, as it respects the patronage which it has at different periods received, has been remarkable for a series of waxings and wanings. During the first ages of the church, when the style of Christianity was 'to believe, to love, and to suffer,' this sentiment seems to have obtained a prevalence so general as to be properly entitled all but absolutely catholic. After the lapse of the three first centuries, a gradual change was wrought in public opinion in regard to this doctrine; a change effected by the combined influence of secular prosperity in the church, and of the controversial opposition of great names against the tenet itself. Origen, Augustine, and Jerome successively arrayed themselves against a Judaizing dogma discountenanced,

as they supposed, at once by the spiritual genius of Christianity, and by a fair and rational interpretation of its letter. Their influence, it cannot be doubted, contributed powerfully to weaken the hold which millennarianism had upon the minds of their contemporaries, and to pave the way for its general abandonment. Add to this, that the more favored and felicitous condition of the church under Constantine and his successors for one or two centuries, tended naturally to wean the thoughts of the pious from the anticipation of future to the meditation of present blessedness, in which it is not unlikely that some beheld an actual fulfilment of the promised rest, peace, and joy of the world's expected Sabbatism. During the invasions of the northern nations and the deluge of disasters which then flowed in upon the empire, speculation was overborne, and the minds of Christians were absorbed by the commotions of the times and the evils endured by them or impending over them. Little attention therefore was paid to the themes of the Apocalypse, and the conceptions they had formed of prophetic scripture, if they had formed any, became confused and obscure; they waited for light, but darkness continued to surround them.

Through the dreary tract of the ages of darkness scarcely a vestige of millennarian sentiments is to be traced, but the dormancy of the doctrine was interrupted by the rousing events, the moral earthquake of the Reformation. The Anabaptists in Germany, and, some time after, the Fifth Monarchy men in England carried their notions to the extreme of infatuation, and created a destructive ferment around them.

At length the ebullition of enthusiasm subsided, and the fiery zeal of mistaken men died away. Since that time till within a very few years the millennarian cause has excited little interest and occasioned little disturbance. The writings of Mede in the seventeenth century revived indeed in a measure the ancient doctrine, and individual writers have at one time and another between that time and the present sent forth their speculations, advocating substantially the same views. Within the period, however, of five or six years, the subject has acquired anew a considerable degree of prominence, and given rise, particularly in England, to an animated controversy, which is yet dividing the ranks of biblists and theologians. The letter-men and the allegorists of the three first centuries are revived in the *literalists* and the *spiritualists* of the present day.

The sentiments of those in modern times who may be ranked under these two heads may be gathered with sufficient distinctness from the ensuing series of extracts from their principal writers.

1. *Those who hold to the personal reign of Christ on earth during the thousand years.*

Of this class the venerable Joseph Mede, born 1586, died 1638, one of the profoundest Biblical scholars of the English church, of whom it was said that in the explication of the mysterious passages of scripture, 'he discerned the day before others had opened their eyes,' may be considered in modern times the father. He was distinguished for the diffidence, modesty, and caution with which he broached his opinions on these recondite subjects. As to the character of the expected millennial

kingdom of Christ, the following is his unpresuming language:—

"What the quality of this reign should be, which is so singularly differenced from the reign of Christ hitherto, is neither easy nor safe to determine, further than that it should be the reign of our Savior's victory over his enemies, wherein Satan being bound up from deceiving the nations any more, till the time of his reign be fulfilled, the Church should consequently enjoy a most blissful peace and happy security from the heretical apostacies and calamitous sufferings of former times; but here (if any where) the known shipwrecks of those who have been too venturous should make us most wary and careful, that we admit nothing into our imaginations which may cross or impeach any catholic tenet of the Christian faith, as also to beware of gross and carnal conceits of Epicurean happiness, misbeseeming the spiritual purity of saints. If we conceit any delights, let them be spiritual. The presence of Christ in this kingdom will no doubt be glorious and evident, yet I dare not so much as imagine (which some ancients seem to have thought) that it should be a visible converse on earth. Yet we grant, he will appear and be visibly revealed from heaven; especially for the calling and gathering of his ancient people, for whom in the days of old he did so many wonders."—*Mede's Works*, *Book* iii. *Rem. ch.* xii. p. 603.

The subsequent testimony of the excellent Joseph Caryll, author of a Commentary on Job, is prefixed to a work published by Nathaniel Holmes, D.D. during the period of the English Commonwealth:—

"That all the saints shall reign with Christ a thousand

years on earth, in a wonderful, both spiritual and visible, glorious manner before the time of the ultimate and general resurrection, is a position which, though not a few have hesitated about and some opposed, yet has gained ground in the hearts and judgments of very many both brave and godly men, who have left us divers essays and discourses upon this subject. And having perused the learned and laborious travails of this author, I conceive that the church of God hath not hitherto seen this great point so clearly stated, so largely discussed, so strongly confirmed, not only by the testimony of ancient and modern writers of all sorts, but by the Holy Scriptures throughout, as it is presented in this book. Wherein also divers other considerable points are collaterally handled, all tending to set forth the catastrophe and result of all the troubles and hopes of such as fear God, as the preface to their eternal bliss. And whereas some have been and still are apt to abuse this doctrine by making it an occasion to the flesh, and of heating themselves in the expectation of a carnal liberty and a worldly glory, I find that this author hath cautiously forelaid and prevented all such abuses, by showing the exceeding spiritualness and holiness of this state, to which as none but the truly holy shall attain, or having attained it, they shall walk in the height of holiness. And therefore I judge this book very useful for the saints and worthy of the public view."—*Congreg. Magaz. New Series*, vol. v. p. 39.

Approaching nearer to our own times, Dr. Gill stands forth conspicuously among his contemporaries as a distinguished advocate of millennarianism.

"There will be a personal and glorious appearance of the Son of God, 'the Lord himself shall descend' (1 Thess. 4. 16.) not by his Spirit or the communication of his grace, or by his gracious presence as before; but in person he will descend from the third heaven, where he is in our nature, into the air where he will be visible; every eye shall see him when he cometh with clouds, or in the clouds of heaven, which will be his chariot; he will descend on earth at the proper time; and his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives; on that spot of ground from whence he ascended to heaven. Job seems to have this descent of his in view when he says, 'He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;' which seems to respect not so much his first coming as his second, since it is connected with the resurrection of the dead. There will be (also) a resurrection of the bodies of the saints; the dead in Christ, who died in union with him, believers in him, and partakers of his grace shall rise first: they will have the dominion over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection, who will not rise until the end of that day; there will be a thousand years distance between the resurrection of the one and that of the other; hence the resurrection of the just as that is named in distinction from that of the unjust, is called the first resurrection, Rev. 20. 5, 6."

After mentioning the change of living saints, their being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the conflagration of the material heavens and earth, he proceeds:—

"Then there will succeed new heavens and a new earth, which God has promised, and which the Apostle

Peter says, saints look for according to his promise; and of which the Apostle John had a vision. To this new earth Christ will descend, and he will dwell in it here; the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he shall dwell with them; this shall be the seat of Christ's personal reign; here he will reign before his ancients gloriously; here he will have his palace and keep his court, and display his glory and the greatness of his majesty; and here his people will dwell with him, who will now be all righteous, perfectly so, even righteousness itself; for in these new heavens and new earth will dwell righteousness; nothing shall enter into this glorious New Jerusalem-state that worketh abomination or maketh a lie; it will be a perfectly holy city, consisting wholly of holy persons; wherefore blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: nor will there be any enemy to annoy the saints in this state; the wicked will be all burnt and destroyed at the general conflagration; the beast and the false prophet, before this, will be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone; Satan will be bound by Christ, and cast into the bottomless pit, where he will remain till the thousand years are fulfilled: for so long will this state continue; so long will Satan be bound; so long the saints will live and reign with Christ; this will be the day of the Lord, which is a thousand years, and which thousand years will be as one day. At the close of these years Satan will be loosed again, and the wicked dead will be raised; which, with the whole posse of devils, will make the Gog and Magog army, who shall be in the four quarters of the world, and go up on the breadth of the earth;

and whose number shall be as the sand of the sea, being all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world; a large army indeed, such a one as never was before, consisting of enraged devils, and of men raised with all that malice and wickedness they died in, with Satan at the head of them; by whom they will be animated to make this last feeble and foolish effort for their recovery and liberty; in order to which they will compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; who will be in no manner of pain and uneasiness at the appearance of this seeming formidable army; being clothed with immortality, secured by the power of God, and Christ being in person with them; then fire shall come down from heaven and devour the wicked; the wrath of God shall seize, distress, and terrify them; divert them from their purpose, and throw them into the utmost consternation and confusion; and then they shall be dragged to the tribunal of Christ and stand before him, small and great, and be judged according to their works, and cast into the lake of fire, where they will be in company with the devil, the beast, and false prophet, and be tormented with them for ever and ever."—*Gill's Sermon on the Glory of the Church of the Latter Day, preached London, Dec.* 27, 1752.

"It will be gathered from the foregoing statements, that I expect the personal and visible kingdom of Christ to rise out of the desolation and ruin of the fourth monarchy in the last days of its divided state; that I believe no fifth dominant sovereignty similar to the four monarchies of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, will ever be established upon earth; but that the power of Christ,

when it smites to shivers the last of these monarchies in its divided state, will establish upon their subverted thrones the everlasting throne of his grace and mediatorial strength; that I believe this throne will admit the subordination of other human sovereignties, and corroborate and support the blessings of civil government and concord through the world: that the glorified saints of the 'first resurrection' will be associated with Christ in the direction and consolidation of this peaceful empire; and that the world will thus exhibit a gladdening spectacle of a vast population of men still indeed mortal and subject to occasional ill, but peaceful, generous, disinterested, living in concord, and heartfelt union; a union social, domestic, and political; attributing all their blessings to the grace and power of Christ, and recognising his will and love alike in the exercise of power, and in the submission of obedience; and that the higher management and control of this world will be in the hands first of Christ himself, and under him in the hands of men—of men once like the mortal sojourners they govern, but now glorified like their Lord, and living amidst their mortal kindred as benefactors, princes, and kings. It is not needful to suppose their presence to be *always apparent* to their happy subjects; but still their visible manifestations to be sufficiently frequent to sustain the mutual allegiance and concord of mankind, to cheer the intercourse of life, and to perpetuate an abiding recognition of their intense benevolence and their sovereign authority."—*Noel's Brief Enquiry*, p. 154.

"The events of the history are these:—The two forms of Antichrist, the beast and the false prophet,

being taken alive and cast into the lake of fire, and the kings of the earth confederate under their banners, being slain; the devil, prime mover of the earth's wickedness and misery, is restrained in chains within the bottomless pit, and straightway the first resurrection ensueth, and Christ with his rising saints takes the reins of the government of the earth. The earth, thus delivered from the headship of Satan and wicked men, rejoiceth in great blessedness, under the headship of Christ and righteous men raised from the dead. And thus things shall stand constituted for the period of the thousand years;—whether literal years we say not, nor doth it at all concern us, but certainly a limited time, however short or long, and certainly not shorter than a thousand literal years. At the end of which finite time, the wickedness of men haply increasing, and the grace of God being accomplished, Satan shall be loosed, and men in this bitter condition shall be tried; and it shall appear that except the Jewish people who are under a covenant of their own (Ezek. 16.), all the nations, envious haply of that distinction, and disobedient to their supremacy, shall give way, and come up in proud revolt to try their might against the people of God's covenant, and against his holy city, which hath its seat within these bounds. This last confederacy of evil is written in the language of Ezekiel's vision of Gog and Magog (chaps. 38, and 39.), and will find its best illustrations from that confederacy of the nations against Israel settled in their own land, before the millennium commenceth. Then it is that God shall interfere and show his mighty power in Christ, who shall consume

them with fire out of heaven."—*Rev. E. Irving's Lect. on the Rev.*, vol. i. p. 80, 81. Lond. 1831.

"I believe that the dispersed of Israel, having been gathered into one, and nationally restored to the land of their fathers; that the secular empire of Rome, exhibited at present in its divided form of the various principalities of Europe, having been revolutionised and desolated; that the Turkish empire having undergone a similar fate; that the ecclesiastical dominion of popery having been thrown down with a violent hand, as when the angel plunged the mill-stone into the sea; that all earth-born power whatsoever having been abolished throughout the world; and that Satan having been expelled from the government which he has usurped so extensively—then shall the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed from heaven in his glorified humanity, himself assume the power, and reign on earth as universal king: at which time he shall to a considerable extent restore this globe to its primitive order, beauty, and fertility; give the saints who are dead a resurrection from the grave; transform them who are alive; liken them in glory to his glorified self; and assemble them in the New Jerusalem, where they shall dwell and reign with Him.—That this reign of righteousness and peace shall continue for at least one thousand solar years, after which Satan shall be loosed again, and prevail to the seduction of many, till the defection have reached such a height, that the rebels shall make an attempt on the sanctity of the New Jerusalem, when signal vengeance shall miraculously overtake them.—That then shall the trumpet blow its dreadful blast to the Second Resurrection, when all the dead

wicked shall also be raised, and judged, and consigned over to the second death.—That this being transacted, the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, having completed his mediatorial work.—What shall succeed this I know not particularly, further than that I do not believe that the earth shall be annihilated, but that rectified and beautified it shall last for ever, as the happy abode of the saints."—*Anderson's Apol. for Millen. Doctrine*, part i. p. 1, 2. Glasg. 1830.

That the sentiments of modern millennarians are, in their leading features, but the revival of the ancient doctrine as held by Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Lactantius, is rendered indubitable, we think, by the foregoing extracts. And if, as we have endeavoured to show, the doctrine of the fathers was merely a transplantation of the Jewish tenet into the Christian church, it follows that the modern hypothesis can claim for itself no other origin. We are aware indeed that there are two passages of scripture which are pressed into the service of this theory, and upon which great reliance is placed as containing all but a positive demonstration of its truth. The first is Ps. 90. 4, 'For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.' The second, which is supposed to be a quotation of the former, occurs 2 Pet. 3. 8. "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." How this language is understood in connexion with the millennarian notion will appear from the following comment, although the author does not in other points agree with

that school. "He says, 'Be not ignorant of this *one thing*, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' By this expression, '*this one thing*,' he plainly shows that it is not used as a general expression; for in that way it is as true, and might as well be said, that one day is with the Lord as a million of years. To show that he used the expression in a very particular sense, the apostle repeats it, 'that a thousand years are as one day.' It is highly probable, that it is in reference to some such division of time as the ages of the world into seven millennaries, and the seventh of these a sabbatism, that six days were spent in the creation of the world, and that the seventh was sanctified for a sabbath. The Almighty Creator could have made the world in a moment, as easily as in six days; and for any thing which we know, another day or another proportion of time might have been as fit for a sabbath as the seventh."—*Johnston on the Revelation*, vol. ii. p. 326.

Mede speaks to the same effect. After giving the following as a correct paraphrase of the words:—"But whereas I mentioned the day of judgment, lest ye might mistake it for a short day, or a day of a few hours, I would not, beloved, have you ignorant, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"—he observes;—"Thus I expound these words by way of a preoccupation or premunition; because they are the formal words of the Jewish doctors when they speak of the *day of judgment* or day of Christ, as St. Peter here doth; viz. '*Una dies Dei Sancti Benedicti sunt mille anni*'—'*A thousand years are one day*

of the Holy Blessed God.' And though they use to quote that of the ninetieth Psalm, (*Mille anni in oculis tuis sicut dies hesternus*'—*A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday,*) for confirmation thereof, yet are not those words formally in the Psalm. So that St. Peter in this passage seems rather to have had respect to that common saying of the Jews in this argument, than to the words of the Psalm, where the words, 'One day with the Lord is as a thousand years,' are not, though the latter part of the sentence, 'a thousand years as one day,' may allude thither; as the Jews also were wont to bring it for a confirmation of the former. 2. These words are commonly taken as an argument why God should not be thought 'slack in his promise' (which follows in the next verse); but the first fathers took it otherwise; and besides it proves it not. For the question is not, whether the time be long or short in respect of God, but whether it be long or short in respect of us; otherwise not only a thousand but an hundred thousand years are in the eyes of God no more than one day is to us, and so it would not seem long to God if the day of judgment should be deferred till then."—*Mede's Works, Book* iii. p. 611.

Of the interpretation of this passage given by the writers now cited it may be said, that the allusion to the traditionary hebdomadal division of time, if it do exist in the words, is so extremely covert that it will ever be liable to be questioned or denied. The evidence by which such an interpretation is to be demonstratively shewn to be the true one is and always must be wanting. One man may be firm in the belief that such is indeed

the very drift of the apostle's words, but as he can bring no argument but the conviction of his own mind or that of other men, to affect the credence of another, he ought not to deem it surprising if he does not succeed in gaining his assent to an opinion which cannot be *proved* to be true. All that can be said of it is, that while on the one hand it cannot be shown to be true, on the other it cannot be proved to be false.

But even admitting the justness of the millennarian construction of this passage, it still leaves the main point as unsettled as before; viz. the identity of the seventh millennary of the world with the millennium of John in the Apocalypse. This is a point which all the writers of the millennarian school have uniformly *taken for granted* without requiring or advancing the least shadow of proof. In this respect therefore the whole theory labors under a radical, and we fear a fatal, defect of evidence. But we proceed to state the opinions—

II. *Of those who deny the personal, but maintain the spiritual, reign of Christ on earth, for the period of a thousand years.*

Chiliasts, or Millennarians, is a name which, from an early period, has been bestowed upon such as have been looking for a seventh millennium, in which our Lord Jesus Christ should personally appear and reign with his people on earth. But others also, not so denominated, have expected, and do expect, a *spiritual reign* on earth for a thousand years. This class embraces a large majority of the Christian world at the present day. They agree with the former for the most part in regard to the time of the millennium, but differ

ing this thousand years; and in this both Dr. Burnet and Mr. Mede expressly have renounced their doctrine.*

2. Though I dare not absolutely deny what they all positively affirm, that the city of Jerusalem shall be then rebuilt, and the converted Jews shall return to it, because this probably may be collected from those words of Christ, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down till the time of the Gentiles is come,' Luke 21. 24, and all the prophets seem to declare the Jews shall then return to their own land, Jer. 31. 38-40, yet do I confidently deny what Barnabas and others of them do contend for, viz. that the temple of Jerusalem shall be then built again; for this is contrary not only to the plain declaration of St. John, who saith, 'I saw no temple in this New Jerusalem,' Rev. 21. 22, whence I infer there is to be no temple in any part of it; but to the whole design of the epistle to the Hebrews which is to shew the dissolution of the temple service, for the weakness and unprofitableness of it; (and) that the Jewish tabernacle was only a figure of the true and 'more perfect tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man;' the Jewish sanctuary only a worldly sanctuary, a pattern and a figure of the heavenly one into which Christ our high priest is entered, Heb. 8. 2,—9. 2,—11. 23, 24. Now such a temple, such a sanctuary, and such service, cannot be suitable to the most glorious and splendid times of the Christian church; and therefore the apostle saith,

* This may be questioned. These writers have *modified* the creed of the ancients on this subject, without renouncing it.

'The Lord God omnipotent, and the Lamb, shall be their temple.'

3. I differ both from the ancient and the modern millennaries, as far as they assert that this shall be a reign of such Christians as have suffered under the heathen persecutors; or by the rage of Antichrist; (I) making it only a reign of the converted Jews and of the Gentiles then flowing into them, and uniting into one church with them. This I believe to be indeed the truth of this mistaken doctrine."—*Whitby's Treatise on the True Millennium*, p. 9, 10.

Thus speaks Dr. Bogue.

"Having noticed these erroneous views of the doctrine, allow me to mention, in a few words, what I conceive to be the Millennium of the Christian Church,—which God has graciously revealed by his servants the Prophets. It appears, then, that there will be far more eminent measures of divine knowledge; of holiness of heart and life; and of spiritual consolation and joy, in the souls of the disciples of Christ, than the world has yet seen: and these will not be the attainments of a few Christians, but of the general mass. This delightful internal state of the Church will be accompanied with such a portion of external prosperity and peace, and abundance of all temporal blessings, as men never knew before. The boundaries of the kingdom of Christ will be extended from the rising to the going down of the sun; and Antichristianism, Deism, Mahometanism, Paganism, and Judaism, shall all be destroyed and give place to the Redeemer's throne. By the preaching of the Gospel, the reading of the Bible, and the zeal of

Christians in every station; by the judgments of heaven on the children of men for their iniquities; above all, by the mighty efficacy of the Holy Ghost, will the glory of the latter days be brought about. Religion will then be the grand business of mankind. The generality will be truly pious; and those who are not will be inconsiderable in number, and most probably be anxious to conceal their real character; and their sentiments and practice have no real weight or influence on the public mind. The earnest desire which every pious soul must feel for the long continuance of this glory, will be gratified to hear, that the time mentioned in prophetic language, as the period of its duration, is a thousand years. Such I believe to be the doctrine of the Millennium."—*Bogue's Disc. on the Millen.* p. 18.

"By the millennium, I do not understand such a state as accords to any of the many superstitious and enthusiastic descriptions of the renovation of the earth after the general conflagration, of the first resurrection of the bodies of the saints to live again for a thousand years upon that renovated earth, and of the personal reign of Christ for a thousand years on earth; which have been published to the world even by men of considerable note. These conjectures I reject, because there is no foundation for them in scripture; and they are highly unreasonable and improbable in themselves, so far as we are capable of judging on such a subject. But by the millennium I understand a triumphant state of the kingdom of God or true religion of Jesus on earth for a thousand years. This kingdom of God is righteousness, truth, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This kingdom, con-

sisting of these four constituent parts, shall be in a triumphant state during the whole millennium. Then mankind shall in a very high degree be freed from ignorance and error; shall love, study, and know the truth on every subject in which they have any concern, and especially on the subject of religion. Universal righteousness shall prevail. They shall pay that regard to the perfect and meritorious righteousness of Christ, which accords to truth, to the perfection of the divine law, to the infinitude of divine justice, to its own perfection, to their need of it, and to the gracious purpose of God in sending Christ into this world to fulfil all righteousness. They shall love and practise righteousness to God, to their brethren of mankind, to all the creatures of God with whom they have intercourse, and to themselves, in all its branches: and they shall make perpetual progress in truth and righteousness. Universal peace shall prevail on the earth. Men, as individuals, shall enjoy peace with God, and peace of conscience; as connected in society, they shall live in peace with their neighbors, whether in smaller or larger societies. Private quarrels and public wars shall cease to the ends of the earth. The brute creation, treated with gentleness by men, shall become much more gentle and harmless to them and to one another than they are now. Universal joy shall abound. That joy which is pure and exalted happiness, that joy which is congenial to a mind renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Not only shall all public affairs be conducted with prosperity and joy, but individuals also shall be happy. They shall be blessed with that joy, which is inseparable from high

attainments in truth, righteousness, and peace. Such, in a certain degree, shall be the situation of the whole world during these thousand years; and in a very high degree of every part of it, except that styled Gog and Magog."—*Johnston on the Rev.* vol. ii. p. 310, 311.

As our views upon the whole subject of the millennium will be given in full in the sequel, it will be unnecessary to anticipate here the remarks which we should otherwise have to offer upon these quotations. Error is more effectually subverted by the establishment of truth. The light in which we view them will disclose itself as we advance. We are now prepared to enter upon the direct consideration of the subject.

CHAPTER III.

EXPLICATION OF THE SYMBOL OF THE DRAGON.

The Binding of Satan or the Dragon the main feature of the anticipated Millennium—Necessary to determine the Import of this Symbolical Action—This cannot be done without first fixing the import of the Dragon himself as a Symbol—With this view the Vision of the Dragon, Rev. xii., minutely considered—The sun-clad and star-crowned Woman explained—The Dragon shown to be a symbol of Paganism—The War between Michael and the Dragon explained—The remaining Circumstances of the Vision explained—Objections answered—Reflections.

THE grand characteristic of the Millennium described by John is the binding of Satan or the Dragon. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Now as the whole book of the Apocalypse is marked by a sustained unity of character, imparting its revelations not in literal but in figurative language, this is to be regarded as a symbolical action, forming a part of the tissue of visionary scenery running through the book, every portion of which is to be interpreted in consistency with the structure of the whole. In this sense, that may be said with peculiar propriety of the Revela-

tion of John which is elsewhere said of the whole Scriptures, that no prophecy is of any private interpretation; i. e. no prophecy is of an *isolated* interpretation; but is to be regarded as a constituent portion of a general system of prophecy, and therefore unsusceptible of a just and genuine interpretation when viewed apart from its peculiar relations and dependencies. If, then, we would establish the exposition of the scriptural doctrine of the Millennium upon its legitimate basis, it is indispensably requisite that the import of this symbolical action, the binding of Satan, should be determined in the outset. But how can this be ascertained without fixing in the first instance the hieroglyphical significancy of Satan or the Dragon himself? Here, if we mistake not, has lain the prime and radical error of nearly all commentators upon the Apocalypse, and of most of the modern advocates of a future Millennium. They have understood this title in its literal sense, as the designation of the prince of evil spirits acting exclusively in his appropriate character of spiritual agent, tempting and inciting the minds of men to sin. But as Satan in this connexion is indubitably identified with the Dragon of a former vision, and as the Dragon, from his being represented with seven heads and ten horns, and from the other peculiar attributes ascribed to him, must stand as the hieroglyphical representative of some substantial persecuting power, it is obvious that the epithet Satan or Devil, in its prophetic bearings, must point to something else than a mere disastrous influence putting itself forth upon the sentient spirits of men.

To the task therefore of determining, according to the

principles of symbolic interpretation, the legitimate scope of this emblem, we now address ourselves; a purpose in the prosecution of which it will be necessary to enter into a minute and critical analysis of other passages in the book where the mention of this ill-omened personage occurs. In this mode of conducting the enquiry we shall in fact embrace a connected history of the Dragon in his successive prophetical developments, tracing him through the three grand stages of his manifestation; in which he appears, (1.) as holding a preeminence in the Apocalyptic heaven; (2.) as cast down from thence to the earth; (3.) as degraded from the surface of the earth to a place of confinement in its subterranean abysses.

As he is first ushered to view in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, we shall commence our investigation with a detailed exposition of that part of the book, the results of which will be subsequently applied to the elucidation of the twentieth, as it is upon the right interpretation of the twentieth that the whole doctrine of the Millennium hinges. Our enquiry may conduct us over a pretty wide field of research, but we flatter ourselves that the reader will find enough on the way of curious and rare to reward the toil of travel.

REVELATION, CHAP. XII.

1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2. And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and

pained to be delivered. 3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. 7. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought and his angels, 8. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short

time. 13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The book of Revelation is eminently peculiar and unique in its structure. The true order of the great chain of events predicted in it is not to be determined by the recorded order of the visions in which they are shadowed forth. On the contrary, it is not unfrequently the case, that one, two, or three chapters are occupied with the visionary representation of a train of affairs extending over a given period of time, and terminating at a particular epoch, while the chapter immediately subsequent, taking up another order of occurrences, remounts to a period of antiquity equally remote with the preceding, and, with a different object in view, conducts us over the same, or nearly the same, chronological era. A vision, therefore, at the beginning of the book, may point to an event occurring in the last ages of time,

while one at the close of the volume may remand us back for its fulfilment to the primitive periods of Christianity. The grand canon of Apocalyptic interpretation, originally laid down by Mede, and since adopted by all the best commentators, is this:—That the order of the visions is to be determined, irrespective of any previous hypothesis, wholly and solely by the intrinsic characters of the visions themselves, a careful study of which will enable one to distinguish with more or less precision those which synchronize from those which do not. This has been termed the principle of 'abstract synchronization,' and certainly affords a clew of the utmost importance to those who are prompted to thread the mazes of the Apocalyptic labyrinth. Governed by this principle, the eminent expositor above mentioned has occupied a considerable portion of his *Clavis Apocalyptica* with the independent harmonical sorting and arranging of the various predictions of the Revelation which are chronologically connected with each other. In this he has performed an invaluable service to the cause of prophetical interpretation. It may be doubted, indeed, whether he has been uniformly correct in the particular applications of his principle, but as to the soundness of the principle itself there can be no question.

On the ground, therefore, of this admitted law of exposition, we remark, that the chapter before us introduces a vision entirely distinct from all that has preceded. Its connexion with the foregoing chapter, which is at first view by no means obvious, may be stated thus:—The closing verses of that chapter contain the

account of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the vehicle of the third woe, which, while it announces the passing over of the regency of the kingdoms of this world from the hands of their former despotic and secular rulers into the hands of Jesus Christ, their rightful, all-competent, and spiritual sovereign, proclaims also the coming of a time of wrath upon the angry nations, who had hitherto obstructed and still continued to resist the Savior's assumption of his legitimate supremacy. It was now the time of judgment, when *they* were to be destroyed who had themselves destroyed or corrupted the earth. But as yet no exact specification had been given of the body of men upon whom the desolating woe of the seventh trumpet was destined to fall. It is plain indeed, from a subsequent part of the book, that the subjects of this woe were to exist in the form of the community symbolically denominated the Beast. As the Beast, however, was a power which was to act a very prominent and conspicuous part in the prophetic drama, it was peculiarly fitting that the spirit of inspiration should in this matter assume the province of the historian, and give us a brief but comprehensive sketch of the origin, rise, progress, career, and catastrophe of this mystic monster. This accordingly is done in the series of chapters extending from the thirteenth to the nineteenth inclusive. But the Beast of the Apocalypse was the lineal descendant of the Dragon; it was necessary, therefore, in order to the tracing of the symbolical pedigree of the Beast, that the narrative should commence with the history of the Dragon, his predecessor, who 'gave him his power, his seat, and great authority.'

It is for this end, accordingly, that the vision of the Beast is prefaced with that of the Dragon. The one would be incomplete without the other. This view of the subject, which seems not to have occurred to preceding expositors, will be found, if we mistake not, of the utmost importance in unravelling the enigmas of the Revelation. We are persuaded, at least, that in the explication of the doctrine of the Millennium, no scheme can be well founded which entirely disregards it.

The prophet, in the course of the supernatural revelations vouchsafed to him in his banishment, beholds a woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and her head adorned with a diadem or coronet of twelve stars. This symbolical woman is represented to the entranced eye of the Seer as upon the eve of giving birth to a man-child, who was to enter upon a predestined state of authority, in which he should rule all nations with a rod of iron; a badge of dominion betokening not so much the *severity*, as the *firmness* and *strength* of his universal government. At this perilous juncture, in immediate juxtaposition with the parturient woman, the Prophet beholds 'a great red dragon,' distinguished by seven heads and ten horns, while each of the heads was surmounted with a kingly crown. "And he stood before the woman for to devour her child as soon as it should be born." The child however escapes the rapacious jaws of the monster. Instead of becoming the victim, he becomes the victor, of the destroyer; for being, by divine interposition, caught up to the throne of God, he there, under the appellation of 'Michael,' begins a war against the Dragon and his angels, which is

finally terminated by the utter discomfiture of the latter, and his dejection, with all his warring legions, from the ascendancy which he had hitherto possessed. Upon this a triumphal song is sung on high—lofty pæans of praise and gratulation resound through the heavenly regions—and the mutual felicitations of the victors are mingled with devout ascriptions to that Almighty Power through which their conquest had been achieved.

Such are the outlines of this significant phantasm replete with a fulness of inspired import. We have here the sacred hieroglyphic, couching under it a meaning infinitely more momentous than the mystic chroniclings of the monuments of Egypt; and the task now remains of endeavouring to translate from the pictorial to the verbal language the burden of the Prophet's symbols.

And first of the Woman. "A woman clothed with the sun," &c. Throughout all antiquity, both sacred and profane, there is no symbol more frequent or familiar than that by which *a female is employed to represent a community.* Cities are often thus depicted upon the medals, coins, and inscriptions, which have come down to us from antiquity, and it is not a little remarkable, that in an ancient coin commemorative of the Babylonish captivity, the nation of Israel is represented by a female sitting under a palm-tree overwhelmed in tears. The phraseology, moreover, in which the Jewish church is denominated 'the virgin daughter of Zion,' 'the daughter of Jerusalem,' &c. is familiar to every reader of the scriptures. The ecclesiastical community of that people is called by Isaiah and Jeremiah a 'bride;' and Ezek. ch. 16. contains an extended allegory, in

which the Jewish church is represented under the figure of a female advancing through the periods of childhood and youth to the age and stature of a woman. So when the Israelites were guilty of idolatry, the nation is spoken of collectively as an adulteress or harlot. The same kind of diction prevails in those passages which are prophetical of the Christian church. In Ps. 45. 10–17, she is spoken of as a bride, and the scene of her nuptials minutely described; while the entire book of the Canticles is nothing but a continued allegory shadowing forth the mystical union between Christ and the church, his spiritual spouse. Similar allusions occur in the New Testament. Paul, in 2 Cor. 11. 2, says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as *a chaste virgin* to Christ." And in the subsequent parts of this book, the Christian church is exhibited under the same emblem where the marriage of the Lamb is spoken of. The false church also is adumbrated by the image of a woman clothed in purple and scarlet, and drunk with the blood of the saints, Rev. ch. 17. where the force of the symbol, as pointing to a *body politic*, is expressly defined by the interpreting angel;—"And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth;" 'City' here is to be understood in the sense of *community*. In like manner, other communities or polities beside those which are sacred are denominated by the same symbolical term. In Isaiah 47. 1, for instance, the city or kingdom of Babylon is thus apostrophized: "Come down, and sit in the dust, *O virgin daughter of Babylon;*" explained in the Targum by 'Regnum con-

gregationis Babyloniæ,'—*kingdom of the Babylonian congregation*; called 'daughter of Babylon,' in the same manner as Homer has παιδες Αχαιων—υιες Αχαιων, *children of the Greeks—sons of the Greeks*, for Greeks simply. We may set it down, therefore, as a conceded point of interpretation, that the Woman in this passage is *the representative of a community, a multitudinous body of men.* This however is advancing but a single step in our inquiry. The next point is to identify this mystic personage, or to determine the *specific community* of which she is the type. In doing this we are forced, after much deliberation, to remount to a period no less distant than the transaction in Eden. There, it will be recollected, it was announced, as the proto-promise of evangelic mercy, to our lapsed maternal progenitor, that a perpetuated enmity should subsist between her (spiritual) seed and the seed of the serpent. The issue, moreover, of this protracted feud it was declared should be the bruising of the head of the serpent by the seed of the woman. Now it is evident, that, although in the phrase 'seed of the woman,' a special reference is had to the Messiah, to whom the title emphatically pertains, yet it is in effect but another name for *a line of descendants of peculiar character*, contradistinguished from the remnant of her natural progeny styled the 'seed of the serpent.' For in the sense of *physical derivation* it is plain that the 'seed of the serpent' is as truly the seed of the woman as those who are by way of eminence expressly so called. Suppose now it were the object of the Holy Ghost to select an appropriate symbol or hieroglyphic, by which to adumbrate this collective,

successive, progressive body, as it gradually evolved itself through a series of ages, should we not say that that of a 'woman' was peculiarly suited to the purpose? —especially when it is considered, that the Omniscient Spirit foresaw that the ransomed portion of human kind were to sustain to their divine Ransomer the conjugal relation? If this be conceded, if it be admitted that the 'woman' of this vision is but a collective designation of the *spiritual* seed of Eve, it will obviously follow, that the predicted line of the woman's seed is to be traced in the history of the Jewish church. *The true church of God, therefore, as existing in the nation of Israel, is the sun-clad woman of the Apocalypse.* We do not say that the *Jewish nation as such* constitutes the substance of this prophetical shadow, but *the true church*, as embodied in that nation, and which by continuity of being under a change of form passed into the Christian church under the new economy. For we find this woman, long after the dissolution of the Jewish state, represented as flying into the wilderness, and there subsisting for the space of 1260 years, which is undoubtedly to be understood not of the Israelitish nation, but of the church of Christ. The object of the Holy Spirit, however, in this part of the vision, was to portray the true church in a form adapted to its ante-Christian state, and the imagery has therefore mainly a Jewish aspect. Guided by this clew, the solution of the symbols is not difficult. In the possession of the sunlight of revelation during every period of her ecclesiastical existence, we see what is implied in the radiant investment of solar glory in which she shone forth. In

the twelve patriarchs of the old dispensation, to which the twelve apostles of the new corresponded, we see the crown of twelve stars adorning her reverend brows. In the subserviency of the moon to the uses of the Jewish church, in regulating the fasts, feasts, and convocations of that primitive economy, we learn the drift of the emblem, 'the moon under her feet,' a station indicative not of *degradation*, but of *ministry;* as a servant at the feet of his master is not there to be trampled upon, but to be at his beck and bidding. While of the circumstance of the woman's being upon the eve of the maternal relation, we have to look for a solution merely to the fact, that through a tract of ages *the Jewish church was pregnant with the promise of the Messiah.* In the womb of her faith and hope reposed for ages the unborn 'desire of nations.' And as the destined mother anticipates with earnest solicitude the natal hour of her expected offspring, so did the covenant race long for the ushering into life of their promised Lord and King.

We have thus, we imagine, paved the way for the unravelling of the other portions of the scenery of this remarkable vision. We have seen that the Apocalyptic Woman is a designed impersonation of a continuous line or succession of men, stamped with the seal of a peculiar character, and extending from the primeval epoch of recovered grace down to the period of Christ's nativity. And we beg leave to remark, that this idea of continuity, of progressiveness, of gradual developement, is all-important to the right explication of the imagery.

We now proceed to the symbol of the Dragon.

"Behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns," &c. The fact which we may consider as established, that the Woman represents the 'seed of the woman,' will prepare us for the assumption, that the Dragon or the Serpent, for these words are used interchangeably, represents the 'seed of the serpent,' as progressively evolving itself in the course of natural generation and characteristic action from age to age. For the vision does not contemplate any one particular period of time, but portrays by a stationary symbol a moving series of events. Here then we have vividly depicted before us, in their appropriate emblems, the two great antagonist seeds which have divided the family of man from the beginning, ranged in direct hostility to each other, and running in parallel lines of antithetic existence through the lapse of many centuries. But the scope of the vision is undoubtedly designed to represent the seed of the serpent *under a peculiar aspect*, viz. as a persecuting power. It is important therefore that our conceptions of it should be still more distinct. In a subsequent verse, after the account of the battle and its issue which ensued between Michael and the Dragon, it is said, that 'the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.' This affords an item of information of great moment. The Dragon is here obviously identified with the Devil or Satan, so that if the one is, in this book, an allegorical being, the other is so also. His titles, it will be observed, are recited with the utmost particularity. As a magistrate, in making out a warrant for the apprehension of a villain who

had palmed himself upon the public by different names, would be careful to specify them all by the prefix of an *alias*, so the Spirit, in the present instance, studiously specifies the various designations of this grand adversary, as if to preclude the possibility of mistake. 'The great dragon, *alias* the old serpent, *alias* the Devil, *alias* Satan;—by whatever appellation he may be distinguished, here he is; you may know him by his escutcheon.' Of the two great belligerent parties, therefore, which figured in this world's history for at least 4000 years prior to the Saviour's advent, and who are here shown confronting each other in hostile array, one we learn upon divine authority is the Devil. The interesting inquiry at once arises, Upon what grounds is the being denominated the Devil portrayed in such terrific guise? What mean his seven heads crowned with the badges of royalty? What is implied in the circumstance of his standing, with menacing rapacity, intent to devour the expected birth of the woman? These characters but ill accord with the idea of a merely spiritual agency put forth upon the minds of men. A more substantial and palpable power of evil is certainly represented by the image. In attempting to solve the mystery we observe, that if the Devil or Satan be identical with the Dragon of the Apocalypse, and if the Dragon be but a symbolical personification of the collective body of the serpent's seed, then the Devil also, far from being a mere abstraction or a purely spiritual entity, is but the symbolical title of a vast society of wicked men, pervaded and imbued by the spirit of rancorous hate towards the entire corporation of the right-

eous, and in that form waging an incessant war against them. Consequently we arrive at the conclusion, that the foul and disastrous machinations of the Devil, so far as he is to be conceived of abstractly from the system which he actuates, has been in all ages directed not merely against the *souls*, but against the *bodies* of men; that he has come upon them not merely in the character of an inward tempter moving and enticing their minds to sin, but that he has employed a system of agencies with a view to the infliction of various *physical* evils bearing with tremendous weight upon their individual and social state. Consulting the records of the human race in the pages of history, we learn that it has been by means of an array of organised instrumentalities in the form of tyrannical governments, backed by false religions, that the seed of the serpent have waged their unhallowed warfare against the seed of the woman, the sons of sanctity. It has been through the agency of despotic kings and bigoted priests,—of monarchies and hierarchies,—that the grievous and untold sufferings of the mass of men have in all ages been visited upon them. This assuredly has been the grand character of the satanic devices. This has been the master-plot of this arch-contriver of political and moral mischief to the human race. From the days of Nimrod, when that mighty hunter erected, on the plains of Shinar, the ancient Babylon as the metropolis of an intended universal monarchy, the greatest scourge which has rested upon the earth, that which has breathed with most effect its blasting mildews over the harvest-field of the human mind, has existed in the form of great consoli-

ited governments, founded upon despotic principles, ıforced by gloomy superstitions, and upheld by the rrors of the sword, the rack, the block, and the dun- ion. The Devil has inspired these governmental brics as their prompting genius, and in the language prophecy has given them their denomination. He ıs ensconced himself behind the political outworks. e has plied the secret machinery of the imperial en- nes, and has been to them in fact in all ages precisely at which the soul is to the body. We hesitate not, erefore, to consider the Dragon of the Revelation as *a anding symbol of Paganism*, including in that term e twofold idea of *despotic government* and *false reli- on.* Can a lingering doubt remain of the justness of is interpretation when we advert to the peculiar cos- me of the image? "And behold a great red dragon ving seven heads and seven crowns upon his heads." not a *crown* the symbol of sovereignty? And what n be understood by the seven crowned heads, but ven imperial kingdoms which exercised, at different riods, an oppressive domination over the church? e say, 'at different periods,' because, as the symbols re employed are not to be restricted to any one point time, but are to be conceived as spreading over a ng period, we are forced to regard these seven heads representing seven *successive* reigning powers, com- g one after another into existence by gradual accre- ın through the course of centuries, till at the date of e vision the Dragon had received his entire comple- ent of heads, and in the Pagan Roman Empire stood rth to the eye of the Prophet in the full maturity of

his age, and in the highest vigour of his action. The exact specification of the number *seven* in regard to these emblematic heads is indeed a matter of some difficulty; but as this number is repeatedly used in the sacred volume in an indefinite sense, implying the *sum total*, the *universality*, the *perfection* of the things spoken of, so in the present instance it may simply be intended to denote *all* the despotic and oppressive civil powers which, anterior to the age of the prophet, had put their yokes upon the necks of the peculiar people. In this enumeration we cannot mistake in reckoning Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. And if fuller details of ancient history had remained to us, we should probably be able at least to complete the catalogue. From the fact that John saw each of these heads actually wearing a crown, whereas, at the time of the vision, only the Roman head was in reality in being, it is evident that he was favoured with a lengthened survey of the chronological career of the Dragon, comprising the whole term of the disastrous dominance of his heads. In the subsequent vision of the Beast, the Dragon's successor, the crowns had passed from the heads to the horns, indicating that that sovereignty which had formerly pertained to the seven successive Pagan empires had now became concentrated in the ten independent governments, symbolised by the horns, into which the Roman Empire in its latter stages had become divided.

That this interpretation of 'heads,' as a prophetic symbol, rests upon something more than mere conjecture will appear from a consideration of the nature of

symbolic language. "We must note," says Daubuz, "that the governing part of the political world appears under symbols of different species; and that it is variously represented according to the various kinds of allegories. If the allegory be derived from the sensible world, then the luminaries denote the governing part; if from an animal, the head or horns; if from the earth, a mountain or fortress; and in this case the capital city, or residence of the governor, is taken for the supreme; by which it happens that these mutually illustrate each other. So a capital city is the head of the political body; the head of the animal is the fortress of the animal; mountains are the natural fortresses of the earth; and therefore a fortress or capital city, though set in a plain level ground, may be called a mountain. And this by the rule of analogical metaphors, the terms of which mutually illustrate each other. Thus head, mountain, hill, city, horn, and king are in a manner synonymous terms to signify a kingdom, monarchy, or republic united under one government; only with this difference, that it is to be understood in different respects: for the head represents it in respect of the capital city; mountain or hill, in respect of the strength of the metropolis, which gives law, or is above the adjacent territories; and the like. Thus in Is. 2. 2. 'And it shall come to pass in the last days that the *mountain* of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the *mountains*, and shall be exalted above the *hills*; and all nations shall flow unto it.' This needs not to be proved to signify the kingdom of the Messias. So a capital city is a head, and taken for the whole territory thereof, as in

Is. 7. 8, 9. 'For the *head* of Syria is Damascus, and the *head* of Damascus is Rezin; and the *head* of Ephraim is Samaria, and the *head* of Samaria is Remaliah's son.' Is. 11. 9. 'They shall not hurt or destroy in all my *holy mountain*,' that is, in all the kingdom of the Messias, which shall then reach all over the world, for it follows; 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.' Mic. 6. 7, 8. 'Contend thou before the *mountains*, and let the *hills* hear thy voice: hear, *ye mountains*, the Lord's controversy.' The commentators here say: 'Montes hic vocat principes et proceres'—*he here calls princes and potentates mountains*, citing for it Ps. 72. 3. Is. 2. 14. Habak. 3. 6. So the whole Assyrian monarchy is called a *mountain* in Zech. 4. 7. 'Who art thou, *O great mountain?* before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain;' and in Jerem. 51. 25, '*a destroying mountain*.' Thus also in Dan. 2. 35. 'The stone that smote the image became *a great mountain*, and filled the whole earth;' that is, the kingdom of the Messias having destroyed the four monarchies became an universal monarchy, as it is plainly made out in v. 44, 45. Again, Is. 41. 15. 'Thou shalt thresh the *mountains*, and shalt make the *hills* as chaff." Targ. 'Occides populos, et consumes regna, quasi stipulam pones eos'—*thou shalt slay the people, and shalt consume the kingdoms; thou shalt make them as stubble.*"* Heads and mountains therefore being synonymous symbols, the seven heads of the Dragon are seven monarchies. This is strikingly confirmed by a reference to

* Perpet. Comment. p. 507.

Rev. 17. 9, 10, where the prophet gives a description of the Beast which succeeded the Dragon, and whose power territorially considered was commensurate with that of the Dragon, so that the heads in each are a symbol perfectly equivalent, and which is thus explained by the interpreting angel: "Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings." The translation here is unhappy.* By the sentence being closed at the word 'sitteth,' and the next made to begin thus; 'And there are seven kings,' the 'seven kings' are separated from their antecedents, and the verb 'are' from its nominative, and the reader is led to suppose that the words 'there are seven kings' have no particular connexion with the seven heads in the preceding verse. Whereas it is clear from the original, that the seven heads are the antecedent both to the seven mountains and to the seven kings, and the nominative to both the verbs which precede the words 'mountains' and 'kings.' A literal translation would render the passage thus:—'The seven heads are seven mountains where the woman sitteth upon them, and they are seven kings;' i. e. kingdoms, the uniform sense of the term 'kings' in the style of the prophets. The drift of the hierophantic angel is to inform the wondering seer, that 'heads' and 'mountains' were equivalent symbols, both denoting 'kingdoms.' By the woman's sitting on seven mountains, therefore, we are to understand that the Roman Empire, in its ecclesiastical form, embraced within

* Αἱ ἑπτα κεφαλαι ὀρη εσιν ἑπτα, ὀπου ἡ γυνη καθηται ἐπ' αυτων, και βασιλεις ἑπτα εισιν.

its limits all those ancient sovereignties which had constituted the heads of the Dragon in former ages, and which had successively yielded to the Roman arms, and been merged into constituent parts of its imperial integrity. As, however, the city of Rome itself was seated upon seven hills, there is in the image a simultaneous secondary allusion to that far-famed centre of supremacy. At the same time we do not hesitate to affirm, that the plenitude of the symbol is far from being exhausted by its application to the Capitoline, Viminal, Quirinal, and other hills, which constituted the site of the 'eternal city.' "We must not here forget," says the writer above cited, "as a secondary event or coincidence of this prophecy, that the capital city of the Dragon's dominions was placed upon seven heads or hills. The Roman authors are full of that notion; and as if that circumstance were fatal, not only Rome was so built, but also Constantinople or the New Rome, sister to the former, was built on seven hills. This, I confess, is a kind of fatal coincidence; but yet the first intention of the Holy Ghost was not to express that, but that the empire of the Dragon should, in its whole extent and duration, as also the Beast his successor, consist of seven capital cities or monarchies; which is the true meaning of the seven heads, mountains, or kings. We may not imagine that the Holy Ghost would dwell upon so narrow a conceit as that circumstance of the building of the city, and neglect that remarkable one of the extent of the dominions; besides, that the exposition of seven kingdoms destroys so trifling a notion of the seven mountains. There goes about another account

of these seven heads, said to be found out by King James the First:—that the seven heads were the seven kinds of government which have been in Rome from its foundation under the kings to the emperors and popes. This is mightily applauded by Du Moulin, followed by Mede, Jurieu, and who not. But we cannot acquiesce therein, both upon the account of the true signification of *head* or *mountain*, as we have explained and fully proved it; and more especially for the following reason:—That the Holy Ghost doth not use to call any government by any other name but that of kingdom, and so takes no notice of what changes might be made in the lodging of the supreme power in different hands, provided it remains in the hands of the same nation. It is still the same head though it should run through many more sorts of government. A king signifies the possessor of the supreme power, let it be lodged in one person, two, ten, or more; and a head or capital city is still the same head, though its power be executed by a king, consuls, decemvirs, or senate. For we must argue about the political body as about the animal. The changes that happen in the animal through the various nourishment it takes, or the different ages it goes through, are not wont to make us describe him with different bodies, heads, or faces, (merely) because the appearance of these hath sometimes changed; so it is in the political body. Many revolutions may happen therein from within itself, but as long as the same polity is preserved in the same city, people, and laws, without making any thorough or partial change of nation, occasioned by the force of foreign armies, it is the same political body, and

the same head too, whilst it is held in the same place, and the laws of the government are issued from it. Thus we see that the changes of the ministry make no alteration of the head; and by consequence that every such change makes not a new and different head."*

We have proceeded thus far in our explication of the symbol of the Dragon without appealing, in confirmation of its justness, to any express passage of holy writ. It will be proper, therefore, to ascertain how far the usage of the sacred writers in respect to this remarkable hieroglyphic, goes to authenticate the interpretation now given. In the seventy-fourth Psalm we meet with a plaintive lament of the Psalmist over the desolation and havoc which the enemies of Zion had wrought within the limits of the holy land, and even within the precincts of the sanctuary, the dwelling place of the name of the Lord of hosts. This is followed by an earnest prayer for the divine interposition, grounded upon the recollection of what God had wrought in behalf of his people in former days, of which the suppliant says, v. 12–14, 'For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the *dragons* in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of *leviathan* in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.' This is an evident allusion to the overthrow of the Egyptian power when the Israelites were brought out and delivered from their hand. In the highly figured diction of the prophets the Egyptians

* Perpet. Comment. p. 514.

are denominated *dragons*, and Pharaoh himself, their prince, styled *Leviathan*, the master-monster of the deep. Accordingly the Chaldee Targum renders the passage, 'Tu confregisti capita fortium Pharaonis,'—*thou hast broken the heads of the mighty men of Pharaoh.* The Leviathan is the great Dragon, as we find by Ps. 104. 26. 'There is that *leviathan* whom thou hast made to play therein,' where Δρακων—*dragon* is the rendering employed by the Seventy. The term is in fact applied to any huge monster of the serpent kind, whether aquatic or terrestrial, as even the original Hebrew word for 'whale' is in some cases rendered by the Greek term for *dragon*. As to the expression—'gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness'—this is to be understood symbolically, for in that character *flesh* is used to denote *spoils* or *riches*; so that the language points to the circumstance of the Israelites carrying with them into the wilderness the treasures of gold and silver of which they had despoiled their oppressors, both at the time of their departure from Egypt, and when their dead bodies lay scattered upon the shores of the Red Sea. Again, Is. 51. 9. 'Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the *dragon*? Art thou not it which hath dried up the sea?' Here *Rahab* is *Egypt*, as has been clearly proved by Bochart,* and the Dragon is Pharaoh King of Egypt; strikingly parallel to which is Ezek. 29. 3. 'Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh King of Egypt, the *great dragon* that

* Phaleg. L. IV. c. 23.

lieth in the midst of his rivers.' From his being said to be an inhabitant of 'rivers,' and from the mention, v. 4, of his 'scales,' it is not without reason supposed that the *dragon* here alluded to was the Egyptian *crocodile*, and Bochart has remarked that the Arabians call the crocodile by the name of Pharaoh.* This circumstance however does not affect its symbolical import. In Ezek. 32. 2, the prophet resumes his comparison, saying, 'Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh King of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art *as a whale* (Gr. ὡς δράκων—*as a dragon*) in the seas.' If however we take the word to signify any large creature whatever of the serpent species, it amounts to the same thing. It still denotes a tyrannical persecuting power. In Is. 27. 1, it is remarkable that the same symbol is presented under a striking diversity of titles. 'In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish *léviathan* the piercing *serpent*, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the *dragon* that is in the sea.' Here we have one and the same thing denominated the Leviathan or Crocodile, the Serpent, and the Dragon. 'These,' says Lowth, 'are used allegorically, without doubt, for great potentates, enemies and persecutors of the people of God.' The passage is thus paraphrased by the Targumist:—'In that time the Lord will visit with his great and strong and

* Scheüchzer on this passage observes, that among the ancients the crocodile was the symbol of Egypt, and appears so on Roman coins. And to what could a king of Egypt be more properly compared than to a crocodile?

mighty sword upon the king who is magnified, as Pharaoh the first king, and upon the king who is elevated, as Sennacherib the second king, and shall slay the king who is potent, as the dragon in the sea.' These kings are called Dragons and Serpents, because enemies to Israel. Ps. 91. 13. 'Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the *dragon* shalt thou trample under feet;' i. e. thou shalt bring thy bitterest enemies into subjection.

From all that has now been adduced in relation to the subject, we infer, that the symbolical import of the Dragon throughout the Scriptures is that of a vast system of civil and religious oppression, perpetuated through a long course of ages, and which at the time of this vision, was embodied in the existing Roman Empire, the last in that series of despotic and Pagan powers which went to form the completeness of the draconic dominion. But at the period of the vouchsafement of these visions to John, the Roman Empire embraced within its limits nearly the whole of the then known world, as is evident from the words of the Evangelist, Luke, 2. 1, 'There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed;' meaning all the provinces of the Roman Empire. When it is said therefore that the Dragon which was cast out of heaven was the Old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth *the whole world*, we are led at once to conceive of the 'whole world' as synonymous with the territorial platform of the Roman Empire, which especially constituted the theatre of the Devil's or the Dragon's jurisdiction, and of which he was as it were the actuating

and presiding genius. Accordingly it was the Roman Empire as a grand governmental dominion which the Dragon afterward transferred to the Beast, as it is said Rev. 13. 2, that 'The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.' When we read, therefore, in the history of the Saviour's temptation, that the Devil showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, the explanation doubtless is, that he showed him the splendour and magnificence of the Roman power, of which he claimed the lordship, and by his promising to bestow all this upon Christ provided he would fall down and worship him, it was but promising in other words that he would make him Cæsar, which he imagined he could safely do, inasmuch as he was enabled to say, 'For that is mine, and to whomsoever I will, I give it;' a claim which would seem to be countenanced by his having afterward made it over to the Beast. It was his however merely by divine permission or providential economy, and not by original right. It was for wise reasons, afterward to be developed, that he was permitted to become the ruling spirit of that huge despotism.

And here we cannot but remark, that our interpretation of the symbol of the Dragon receives a strong collateral confirmation from the manner in which the Serpent has ever been regarded by heathen nations. Throughout the mythology of the ancients the Serpent, under some form or other, occupies a very conspicuous place; and how far this feature of their system is to be traced, through broken and distorted traditions, to the scriptural history of the Fall and the symbolical imagery founded

upon it, would constitute one of the most interesting subjects of antiquarian research. Bryant, than whom few men have ever lived better qualified to prosecute the inquiry, had he seen fit to embark in it, remarks, that 'it would be a noble undertaking, and very edifying in its consequences, if some person of true learning and deep insight into antiquity would go through with the history of the Serpent.'* Scarcely a Pagan nation has existed among whom *ophiolatry*, or serpent-worship, has not been established, as will appear from the slightest inspection of their religious hieroglyphics. The fabulous legends of the poets intertwine with the dogmas of the priest and the speculations of the philosopher in forming the thread which conducts us to the inspired origin of the heathen notions on this subject. The idea so prevalent in the early ages of the world of the existence of two great opposing Principles, the Spirit of Good and the Spirit of Evil, the last of which was ordinarily symbolized by a serpent, unquestionably refers itself directly to this source. The following passage, from the treatise of Plutarch on the Isis and Osiris of the Egyptians, is among the most important relics of antiquity. After speaking of Typhon, the Egyptian symbol of the Principle of Evil, he observes: "This very ancient opinion is derived from the divines and lawgivers to the poets and philosophers, having an unknown beginning, that the universe is not a principle without mind and reason, and ungoverned as if left to itself, but is governed by two contrary and jarring

* Bryant's Anc. Myth. vol. i. 473. 4to. ed.

powers, the one leading directly forward to the right, and the other retrograde and wayward. So that this life is mixed, and the world irregular and various, and subject to all manner of change. For if there be nothing without a cause, and good cannot afford the cause of evil, there must be some peculiar generation and principle containing the nature of evil as well as of good. And this opinion was held by the mass of the wisest of men. For they believe that there are two Gods, like antagonists, the first, the Creator of Good, the latter of Evil. The better of them they call *God*, the other *Demon*, as they are termed by Zoroaster, the magician (sage), who is reported to have lived five thousand years before the Trojan war. He called the first *Oromases*, and the other *Arimanes;* and added, that the first was most like *Light*, and the latter like *Darkness* and *Error*."* The name of this evil genius, Αρειμανης, whom Plutarch elsewhere denominates πονηρος δαιμων, *wicked demon*, and who is styled by Diogenes Laertius Ἀδης, *hell*, unquestionably betrays a Hebraic origin. Some derive it from עָרוּם, Chal. אֲרִים *astutus, cunning, crafty*, the appellation bestowed upon the Serpent, Gen. 3. 1, to which, if the Arabic termination be added, it makes it *Ariman*. Others deduce it from רָמָה, Chal. רְמִי, πλανᾶν, *to deceive*, as if it were merely the Greek form of הָרַמָּהוֹן *the deceiver*. Still, in either case, the term shows its affinity with the Hebrew language and with the distinguishing attributes of the Dragon or Old Serpent, the standing adversary of God and man. The name of the idol

* Plut. de Isid. et Osirid. p. 407. ed. Ald.

Rimmon, mentioned 2 Kings 5. 18. is probably to be referred to the same source. Now this mythologic divinity Arimanes is the same with the Typho of the Egyptians, who was represented and worshipped under the form of a serpent. And it is worthy of note that the title *Belial* in the Scriptures, another name for the evil spirit, of which the Greek form is Βελιαρ, *Beliar*, is defined by Hesychius by δρακων, *dragon*. But to what was it owing that the Serpent, the symbol of all ill, the grand personification of mischief and sin, instead of being detested as an enemy, came to be worshipped as a god, having his altars, and services, and votaries among all pagan nations on earth? Perhaps no more satisfactory solution of this remarkable fact can be given, than to suppose that that which was at first abominated as the symbol of the wicked principle, came in process of time, from a motive of fear, to be regarded as having the power of doing harm to mankind, which it was necessary for them to deprecate by sacrifices and offerings. Hence the Serpent began to be worshipped, and the natural effect would eventually be, that he should be regarded as a placable deity, having it equally in his power with other tutelary demons to do good and to confer blessings when his favour was secured. "The devil," says Mr. Owen, "who under the shape of a serpent tempted our first parents, has, with unwearied application, laboured to deify that animal as a trophy of his first victory over mankind. God having passed sentence upon the serpent, Satan consecrates that form in which he deceived the woman, and introduces it into the world as an object of religious venera-

tion. This he did with a view to enervate the force of the divine oracle with respect to the seed of the woman. Scarcely a nation upon earth, but he has tempted to the grossest idolatry, and in particular got himself to be worshipped in the hideous form of a serpent."*

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." A 'tail,' considered as a prophetic emblem, is used to signify two things which frequently concur in the same subject, the one being the cause of the other. (1.) It denotes subjection, or oppression under tyranny. In this sense the symbol occurs with the explanation of God himself, Deut. 28. 13. where he promises blessings to the obedient; 'And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the *tail;* and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath.' (2.) It signifies a false prophet, impostor, or deceiver, one who propagates corrupt and pernicious doctrines, as the scorpion infuses into his victims the deadly poison of his tail. Is. 9. 14, 15. 'Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and *tail*, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and *the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.*' Again, Is. 19. 15. 'Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or *tail*, branch or rush, may do;' i. e. neither the power of the princes nor the devices of false prophets and enchanters shall be at all availing. 'Stars,' on the other hand, is the well-known symbol of spiritual teachers or ministers of the truth; so that by the Dragon's drawing

* Owen's Hist. of the Serp. p. 216.

down from heaven, by means of his tail, a third, that is, a large or very considerable part of the stars, is shadowed forth the exertion of an evil influence through the agency of idolatrous priests and other abettors of Paganism, whereby many of the ministering servants of God, the reputed luminaries of the church, are prevailed upon to apostatize from the true religion, and embrace the errors and abominations of Paganism. But such foul defections are usually the result of the display of the terrors of tyranny. Men are not ordinarily seduced from the true faith into idolatry except from motives of fear. So that the twofold idea of *civil oppression* and *mental delusion* is included under the symbol before us. That this has been in all ages the character of the Dragon, history renders indubitable. For this feature of the symbol, like the foregoing, is not to be limited to any particular era, but is to be regarded as descriptive of the *general character* of the monster to whom it pertains. It was, however, most signally evinced in the history of the persecutions which took place under the Roman emperors. "In every persecution there were great numbers of unworthy Christians, who publicly disowned or renounced the faith which they had professed; and who confirmed the sincerity of their abjuration, by the legal acts of burning incense or of offering sacrifices. Some of these apostates had yielded on the first menace or exhortation of the magistrate; while the patience of others had been subdued by the length or repetition of tortures."*

* Gibbon's Decl. and Fall, p. 219.

"And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it should be born." Like the other features of the hieroglyphic scenery upon which we have already remarked, this also is to be viewed as an action co-extensive with the entire scope of the vision. It is to be regarded as characteristic of the Dragon during the whole reigning term of his existence. For throughout every period of the gradual acquisition of his imperial heads, he maintained the same attitude of deadly hostility against the seed of the woman in their progressive developement. Accordingly, in seeking an explication of this part of the visionary action of the Dragon, we have only to revert to the history of the children of Israel in Egypt, the first probably of his germinating heads; and there, in the ruthless order of Pharaoh to cast all the *male children* into the Nile, we see his horrid appetite glutting itself with infant blood. At a later period, after the attainment of his Roman head, we behold in the sanguinary edict of Herod, commanding the slaughter of the *male children* of Bethlehem and its coasts, the same cannibal hankering gorging itself with its chosen aliment. But of his intended prey he was, in this latter instance, disappointed. The child brought forth by the woman, which we consider to have been literally Jesus Christ himself, was caught up to the throne of heaven. The true Messiah, having broken asunder the bars of the grave, was raised to the right hand of God, and there invested with that divine dominion which the Father had decreed for him from eternity. Then commenced the symbolical war in heaven. Un-

der the sublime appellation of Michael, or, 'Who is like thee, O God?' he girded his sword on his thigh, and addressed himself to the glorious work of vanquishing this potent possessor of high places. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out." As the book of Revelation is made up of a series of pictorial or hieroglyphical emblems, it should not be forgotten that the *reality* of the things said to be done in heaven actually transpires on earth. A war in heaven is but the shadow of a grand contest on earth, as *heaven* in the prophetic symbols seems to denote mainly *a state or position of great conspicuity.* By the necessity of the symbol, the conflicting angels are nothing more than mortal men, who take the opposite sides of a grand litigated question. In truth, the prophet himself furnishes a key to his own phraseology. For scarcely are the angels of Michael brought upon the stage, when they are forthwith styled 'our brethren;' and it is said, moreover, that 'they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and that they loved not their lives to the death.' Nothing therefore can be more evident than that the angels of Michael are mere mortal men, and we are bound by analogy to consider the angels of the Dragon as of the same character. It is only in the peculiar elevated style of prophecy that this is represented as a celestial combat. We have therefore to recur to history to find a series of events which we may suppose to have been adumbrated by the

imagery in question. And such a train of occurrences meets us in the memorable contest between Christianity and Paganism during the three hundred and twenty years subsequent to the first promulgation of the Gospel.* Throughout this extended period, the fierce contention between the religion of the cross and the imperial Paganism of Rome was incessantly kept up.† The fate of the struggle hung for a long time apparently in suspense; for the advantages of the Dragon were to human view signal and numerous. Every time that a band of faithful martyrs was led to the stake or the rack; every time the infuriated cry, '*Ad leones!*' was

* "The vision of the war in heaven in the Apocalypse represents the vehement struggle between Christianity and the old idolatry in the first ages of the gospel. The angels of the two opposing armies represent two opposing parties in the Roman state, at the time which the vision more particularly regards. Michael's angels are the party which espoused the side of the Christian religion, the friends of which had, for many years, been numerous, and became very powerful under Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor: the Dragon's angels are the party which endeavoured to support the old idolatry." —*Horsley's Sermons*, p. 373.

† It is probable that the Spirit of inspiration designed to convey an allusion to this memorable conflict in the words of Paul, Eph. 6. 12. 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness *in high places* (*εν τοις επουρανιοις—in heavenly places*).' Perhaps also the vision of the prophet affords the genuine clew to the designation of the adversary in Eph. 2. 2. 'Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, *according to the prince of the power of the air*;' i. e. the leader and commander of this mystic aerial or heavenly host.

raised over their heads, we see the victory inclining to the side of the Dragon; and yet this was the fact but in appearance, for it was by their meek submission to tortures, by yielding their lives to seal their testimony, that they overcame. They were conquerors through the 'unresistible might of weakness,' for they loved not their lives to the death.

At length the protracted contest sees an end. The persecuting power of the Roman Empire, like Saul on his way to Damascus, is arrested in mid-career, and made obedient to a heavenly vision. Constantine, the emperor, becomes a converted Christian. The rage of persecution ceases. The fires of martyrdom are extinguished. The streams of Christian blood are stanched; and the laws of the empire, before replete with sanguinary enactments against the Christians, are now disarmed of their bloody statutes, and henceforward breathe nothing but peace and protection towards the church. The idols of heathenism fall down from their niches, and its oracles, instinct with the promptings of the old serpent, are struck dumb. The altars of demons sink into the earth, and Christianity rises in her native majesty to the vacated throne of Paganism. This then was the identical result shadowed forth by the casting out of Satan or the Dragon from his supremacy in the hieroglyphic empyrean. Then did he fall like lightning from heaven. Then rose the song of triumph among the ranks of the victors; significant of the loud reverberations of praise, of the din of triumphal ascription, of the hymnings of joy, exultation, and felicitation in the church on earth. In confirmation or illustration of this we have only to

refer to the patristic writings of that period. Sure we are that no one can attentively scan their tenor without being struck with the *tone of gratulation* which pervades them. He has but to consult the works of Eusebius and Lactantius to be convinced that some illustrious theme of joy had kindled their eucharistic strains to the highest note. The church catholic appears to be vocal with thanksgiving and the voice of melody. With one accord they appear to have adopted the language of restored Israel: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream; then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing."

The following translated extract from a laudatory letter of Lactantius to Constantine may serve as a specimen of innumerable passages which might be cited from his own and the works of his contemporaries.

"Nine times subjected to various tortures, nine times hast thou conquered the adversary by a glorious confession. After warring in nine conflicts with the Devil and his satellites, thou hast in nine victories triumphed over the world with its terrors. How pleasing a spectacle was it to God when he beheld thee conqueror! not subjecting milk-white horses or huge elephants to thy chariot, but victors themselves. This is a genuine triumph when conquerors are conquered. For such by thy virtue are effectually subdued; inasmuch as having trampled upon all unhallowed domination thou hast, by a stable faith and unconquered mind, put to flight the whole formidable array of despotic power."

Indeed it would seem that in the very age of Con-

stantine, and by Constantine himself, this amazing revolution was regarded as a fulfilment of the prediction before us; for, as that emperor after his conversion ceased to be a constituent member and minister of the mystical Dragon, but vigorously fought against him in the person of his adherents, it is remarkable that in a letter to Eusebius he says: "But now when liberty is restored, and *that Dragon, by the providence of the great God and our ministry cast out from the administration of public affairs*, the Divine potency has most manifestly appeared to all men."* It is related moreover by the ecclesiastical historian above mentioned, that on a lofty tablet set up over the gate of his palace, visible to every eye, Constantine himself was represented with a cross over his head, and under his feet 'the great enemy of mankind, who persecuted the church by means of impious tyrants, *in the form of a Dragon*,' transfixed through the body with a dart, and falling into the depths of the sea; 'in allusion,' he adds, 'to the fact, that the divine oracles in the books of the prophets denominate that evil spirit *the Dragon* and the *Crooked Serpent*.'† The following passage from the Historian of the Decline and Fall, so often an unwitting and unwilling expositor of the Apocalypse, may be advantageously cited in this connection:—"The assurance that the elevation of Constantine was intimately connected with the designs of Providence, instilled into the minds of the Christians

* ——του δράκοντος ἐκείνου ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν κοινῶν διοικήσεως, του Θεου μεγίστου προνοίᾳ, ἡμετέρᾳ δε ὑπερησίᾳ, ἐκδιωχθέντος.—Eus. de Vita Const. l. 2. c. 46.

† ——τὸν δε ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολεμίον θῆρα, τὸν τὴν ἐκκλήσιαν τὸν Θεὸν διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀθεῶν πολιορκήσαντα τυράννιδος,—'εν δρακόντος μόρφῃ.—Id. l. 3. c. 3.

two opinions, which, by very different means, assisted the accomplishment of the prophecy. Their warm and active loyalty exhausted in his favour every resource of human industry; and they confidently expected that their strenuous efforts *would be seconded by some divine and miraculous aid.*"*—"Nazarius and Eusebius are the two most celebrated orators, who in studied panegyrics have laboured to exalt the glory of Constantine. Nine years after the Roman victory, Nazarius *describes an army of divine warriors who seemed to fall from the sky:* he marks their beauty, their spirit, their gigantic forms, the stream of light which beamed from their celestial armor, their patience in suffering themselves to be heard, as well as seen, by mortals; and their declaration that they were sent, that they flew, to the assistance of the great Constantine. For the truth of this great prodigy, the pagan orator appeals to the whole Gallic nation, in whose presence he was then speaking; and seems to hope that the ancient apparitions would now obtain credit from this recent and public event."†—"The gratitude of the church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron, *who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman world;* and the Greeks, who celebrate the festival of the imperial saint, seldom mention the name of Constantine without adding the title of *equal to the apostles.* If the parallel be confined to the extent and number of their evangelic victories, the success of Constantine might perhaps

* Decl. and Fall, p. 294.
† Id. p. 297.

equal that of the apostles themselves. By the edicts of toleration he removed the temporal disadvantages which had hitherto retarded the progress of Christianity; and its active and numerous ministers received a free permission, a liberal encouragement, to recommend the salutary truths of revelation by every argument which could affect the reason or piety of mankind."*

"He was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him." These words are thus explained by Tertullian;—"Nam dæmonia magistratus sunt seculi hujus"—*for the demons are the magistrates of this world.* As the Dragon himself has a more special reference to the person of the Pagan Roman emperors, the subordinate magistrates are unquestionably denoted by his angels. "The fall of the empire," says Daubuz, "out of the hands of the Heathens soon made all the inferior officers, civil and military, as also the religious dignities, to fall out of their power. Yet this was not done on a sudden, but by progress: however, it is the custom of the Holy Ghost to account any thing done, for the most part, as soon as it is begun; the little time it lasts in doing being accounted as nothing. When the emperors were no more heathens, the idolatrous magistrates were in a great measure removed, and the

* Decl. and Fall, p. 299. The whole of Gibbon's 21st chapter contains a striking undesigned commentary upon this vision of the Apocalypse. Indeed the Christian church has afforded few expositors of the Book of Revelation so valuable as Gibbon. We shall therefore make great use of his work in our attempted exposition. Like Balaam he is made to bless, while his own spirit prompts him to curse.

priests had no more power to do mischief. It (the mischief) only extended where the Dragon and his angels were thrown, that is, upon 'the earth,' upon the *subjects* of the Roman empire, who are still their votaries: the 'earth' having that signification; the Christians, unless corrupted, never bearing that title. *The idolatrous religion only remained in the subjects or common people.*"* This is what is to be understood by the Dragon's being 'cast out into the earth.' The scene of his operations was to be shifted. He had formerly been the ruling spirit of the pagan *governments* of the world, and of the Roman in particular, but now, being ejected from his imperial ascendency, the *great mass of the people* of the empire, represented by the 'earth,' became the subjects of his diabolical plots. It is in the prospective view of this that the heavenly host is represented as announcing his disastrous advent to the earth. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." —"The earth and the sea," says the commentator above quoted, "signify the subjects of the pagan empire both in peace and war, the common people and the soldiery. Many of them were still idolaters; as appears sufficiently by their canonizing their emperors, though Christians. Many of them seemed indeed to turn Christian, but not sincerely; either they secretly observed the pagan rites, or else brought their paganism into the church and corrupted it. However, the Devil

* Daubuz' Perpet. Comment. p. 532.

played still his pranks among them while they continued to be votaries. It was but small power and dominion compared with the imperial power, but still it was some dominion; and he had rather play at small game than not at all. All this denotes that the idolatry would not be so far expelled suddenly, but that it would still remain amongst a great number of the subjects."*

"The accuser of our brethren is cast down." The Dragon, as we have remarked, is the personified spirit of civil oppression and idolatrous delusion combined. As such, his grand aim has ever been to render the people of God, the seed of the woman, obnoxious to the civil power, and upon the pretence of their being enemies to the governments, laws, and institutions under which they lived, to point the sword of magistracy against them. The allusion is perhaps primarily to the history of Job, against whom the foulest accusations were brought by Satan, prompted by the pure diabolism of his nature, and to the instance related, Zech. 3. 1. where the prophet says;—'And he showed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.'† But the character was made good and the symbol accomplished in repeated instances in the events of the sacred history both under the Old and the New Testament. How copiously the Dragon, through his Egyptian head, expectorated the venom of his vile detraction upon the unoffending Israelites, and what grinding op-

* Perpet. Comment. p. 536.

† The literal meaning of the original Greek word rendered *devil* (διαβολος) is *slanderer, traducer, false accuser.*

pression he brought upon them by this means, is obvious from the Mosaic narrative. The following passages, moreover, are strikingly illustrative of the same spirit of malignant defamation against the innocent. Ezra, 4. 12–16. 'Be it known now unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations.—Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers; so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed.' Again, Est. 3. 8. 'And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed.' Acts, 16. 20, 21. 'And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men being Jews do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.' Acts, 17. 6, 7. 'These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is

another king, one Jesus.' How plainly do we hear the hissings of the Old Serpent in these accusations!

But it was at a later period of the church that the Dragon more signally evinced himself to be entitled to this character. Ecclesiastical history makes it evident that the vilest calumnies were cast upon the primitive Christians, upon which their persecutors professed to ground the justice of the punishments so mercilessly inflicted upon them. They were accused of cannibalism, incest, adultery, murder, conspiracy, and of being the procuring causes of all the plagues, famines, and fires which desolated any part of the empire. "The surprise of the Pagans," says Gibbon, "was soon succeeded by resentment; and the most pious of men were exposed to the unjust but dangerous imputation of impiety. Malice and prejudice concurred in representing the Christians as a society of atheists, who, by the most daring attack upon the religious constitution of the empire, *had merited the severest animadversion of the civil magistrate.* Their mistaken prudence afforded an opportunity for malice to invent, and for suspicious credulity to believe, the horrid tales which described the Christians as the most wicked of human kind, who practised in their dark recesses every abomination that a depraved fancy could suggest, and who solicited the favour of their unknown God by the sacrifice of every moral virtue. There were many who pretended to confess or to relate the ceremonies of this abhorred society. It was asserted, that a new-born infant, entirely covered over with flour, was presented, like some mystic symbol of initiation, to the knife of the proselyte,

who unknowingly inflicted many a secret and mortal wound on the innocent victim of his error; that as soon as the cruel deed was perpetrated, the sectaries drank up the blood, greedily tore asunder the quivering members, and pledged themselves to eternal secrecy, by a mutual consciousness of guilt. It was as confidently affirmed that this inhuman sacrifice was succeeded by a suitable entertainment, in which intemperance served as a provocative to brutal lust, till, at the appointed moment, the lights were suddenly extinguished, shame was banished, nature was forgotten, and, as accident might direct, the darkness of the night was polluted by the incestuous commerce of sisters and brothers, of sons and mothers."* The conversion of Constantine and the downfall of Paganism, was the signal for the silencing of these shameless slanders, and accordingly Lactantius, in an epistle to the emperor, says:—"Whence they form the most execrable opinions respecting the chaste and the innocent, and give an easy belief to the fictions which they fabricate. But all these false charges, most sacred emperor, are laid to rest since the high God raised thee up to restore the habitation of righteousness, and to the guardianship of the human race; under whose government of the Roman state we are no longer accounted as impious and abominable, but as the worshippers of God."†

* Decl. and Fall, p. 208.

† Unde etiam quasdam execrabiles opiniones de pudicis, et innocentibus fingunt, et libentur his, quæ finxerunt, credunt. Sed omnia jam, sanctissime imperator, figmenta sopita sunt, ex quo te Deus Summus ad restituendum justitiæ domicilium,

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness," &c. 'Wings,' the instruments of motion, answer in prophecy the superadded purpose of standing as symbols of protection. This is plain from the following, among numerous other passages. Ruth, 2. 12, 'The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, *under whose wings thou art come to trust.*' Ps. 17. 8. 'Keep me as the apple of the eye, *hide me under the shadow of thy wings.*' Ps. 57. 1. '*In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge,* until the secalamities be overpast.' Ps. 63. 7. 'Because thou hast been my help, therefore *in the shadow of thy wings* will I rejoice.' The imagery is manifestly derived from the history in Exodus where the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness from the face of the Egyptians is described very much after the same manner as the withdrawment of the woman into the spiritual wilderness from the face of the serpent. Ex. 19. 4. 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself.' This is enlarged upon, Deut. 32. 11, 12. 'As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him.' As the 'eagle' is a symbol frequently used in the Scriptures to denote a monarchy or a king, and as the eagle, the bird

et ad tutetam generis humani excitavit. Quo gubernante Romanæ Reipublicæ statum, jam cultores Dei pro secleratis ac nefariis non habemur.—*Lact. Inst.* L. VII. c. 26.

of Jove, formed the Roman standard, we seem to be directed, by the necessity of the symbol, to understand it of the Roman Empire subsisting in its two grand divisions, the Eastern and Western, and in this form spreading the wings of its imperial patronage over the church, guarding it from visible persecution, during the interval between the fall of Paganism and the rise of Antichristianism in the sixth or seventh century. But the drift of the emblem undoubtedly involves the idea of *transition* as well as of *tutelage*, and leads us to seek for some kind of recess or withdrawment on the part of the true church from the more central, prominent, and conspicuous station which she had hitherto occupied. The explication of this part of the mystical scenery given by Vitringa,* is entitled to a high degree of consideration. He is of opinion that the emblem was designed to shadow forth a literal migration of a large portion of the church, or a transfer of the seat of its primitive triumphs, from the eastern quarters of the empire, where it hitherto principally flourished, to the then barbarous and uncultivated climes of western and northwestern Europe, especially France, Spain, Germany, England, Holland, Bohemia, Hungary and Denmark, where it was destined to find a permanent though afflicted establishment during the period of the grand apostacy under the reign of the Beast. Accordingly we learn from the ecclesiastical annals of that and the subsequent ages, that by the peculiar providence of God, a line of faithful witnesses for the truth was preserved,

* Anacrisis Apocalypseos, p. 556.

especially in the retired and peaceful valleys of Piedmont and Dauphiny, where the far-famed churches of the Waldenses and Albigenses continued for more than twelve centuries the conservators of the unadulterated faith of the Apostles.* The protection indicated by the eagle's wings is to be considered as having been afforded more especially at the commencement of this long period, while the woman was in the act of flying into the wilderness; for after she had become firmly established in her desert abode, she became the object of the persecuting rage both of the civil and ecclesiastical power of the apostate church. It was therefore by the peculiar interposition of heaven that this mystic woman of the wilderness was protected and 'nourished' in her lonely dwelling place. A succession of faithful pastors was raised up to minister the spiritual aliment of the gospel to these eremite churches, embosomed in their Alpine glens, during the whole prophetical period of the 'time, times, and half a time,' or 1260 years, when the occurrence of the Reformation gave them a door of egress from their obscurity, and they became merged in the great body of Protestant believers.

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman," &c. Of the import of seas, rivers, and water-floods as a prophetic symbol we have

* "The Vaudois are in fact descended from those refugees from Italy, who, after St. Paul had there preached the Gospel, abandoned their beautiful country, and fled, like the woman mentioned in the Apocalypse, to these wild mountains, where they have to this day handed down the Gospel from father to son in the same purity and simplicity as it was preached by St. Paul."—Pref. to Arnaud's Glorious Recovery, p. 13, 14.

an inspired exposition in the words of the hierophantic angel, Rev. 17. 15. 'And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.' This is confirmed by the usage of the ancient prophets. Is. 8. 7. 'Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them *the waters of the river*, strong and many, even the King of Assyria and all his glory.' This is plainly the annunciation of a warlike expedition which under the conduct of the King of Assyria should overflow the land. Is. 28. 2. 'Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a *flood of mighty waters overflowing*, shall cast down to the earth with the hand;' thus explained by the Targum, which is of great value in the explication of prophetic symbols:—'Sicut impetus aquarum fortium inundantium, sic venient contra eos populi, et transferent eos de terra sua'—*Like the violence of mighty overflowing floods shall peoples come against them and remove them from their own land.* To the same effect Jeremiah ch. 46. 7, 8. says, 'Who is this that cometh up *as a flood*, whose waters are moved as the river? Egypt riseth up *like a flood*, and his *waters* are moved like the *rivers;* and he saith, I will go up and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.' Again, in Dan. 9. 26. 'a flood' is expressly interpreted as equivalent to 'war.' 'And the end thereof shall be with a *flood*, and unto the end of the *war* desolations are determined.' The river-flood therefore, sent forth from the mouth of the Dragon to drown the woman, signifies beyond question

invasion of the territories of Christendom or the
nan empire by numerous armies of foreign nations,
ose assault was in some manner instigated by the
lice of the Pagan party, the ministers of the Dragon.
e figurative prediction was accomplished when the
des of barbarous nations from the north of Europe,
Goths, Alans, Suevi, and Vandals, by the secret
achery of Stilicho, prime minister to the emperor
norius, were invited to pour themselves down in
olating torrents upon the southern provinces of the
pire. But what was the result of the incursions
de by these rude and ruthless barbarians? 'The
th,' says the prophet, 'helped the woman, and the
th opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood
ich the dragon cast out of his mouth.' That is,
se barbarian and pagan nations were absorbed into
original population of the Roman provinces. They
only embraced their religion, but affected the laws,
nners, customs, language, and even name of Romans,
that they were in effect completely merged in the
quished nation. Instead of sweeping away the
ristian church, they eventually fell into the ranks of
nominal supporters, and thus contributed to prolong
l perpetuate her existence. "The progress of
ristianity," says Gibbon, "has been marked by two
rious and decisive victories: over the learned and
urious citizens of the Roman empire; and over the
rlike barbarians of Scythia and Germany, who sub-
ted the empire, and embraced the religion, of the
mans. The formidable Visigoths universally adopted
religion of the Romans, with whom they maintained

a perpetual intercourse of war, of friendship, or of conquest. During the same period, Christianity was embraced by almost all the barbarians who established their kingdoms on the ruins of the western empire; the Burgundians in Gaul, the Suevi in Spain, the Vandals in Africa, the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and the various bands of mercenaries that raised Odoacer to the throne of Italy."* "In the course of a very few years," says Mr. Faber, "the religion of Christ had more or less pervaded the whole Roman empire. Succeeding events seemed to threaten if not its absolute extinction, yet, at least, its contraction within its original narrow limits. But the result was very opposite of what, by political sagacity, might reasonably have been anticipated. *The religion of the conquering Goths was, in every instance, nationally abandoned; the religion of the conquered Romans was, in every instance, nationally adopted.* Some of the northern warriors might be earlier, and some might be later proselytes: *but the ultimate universal concomitant of Gothic national invasion was Gothic national conversion.*"

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed," &c. The course of our preceding exposition has conducted us in tracing the history of despotic and idolatrous oppression from its earliest origin down to the time of the public and incipient suppression of Paganism, A. D. 320, and for the space of one or two centuries beyond. The Dragon or the Devil was now ejected from his

* Decl. and Fall, p. 609, 610.

strongholds; he was cast from heaven to earth; but his draconic nature still remained. He was urged on by the same desperate and fiendish malignity as ever against the true sons of freedom, the inheritors of that legacy of civil and evangelic liberty which the Savior bequeathed to his followers. He was still wroth with the woman, and intent upon warring with the remnant of her seed. But it had now become necessary for him to change the mode of his warfare. The entire Roman empire, forming the principal part of the civilized world, having now assumed a Christian phasis, he felt himself compelled to modify his persecuting tactics so as to adapt them to the new circumstances in which he was placed. Accordingly, finding the Roman world become Christian, he determines to become Christian too, and under the name and semblance of Christianity to uproot the very life and being of that divine religion from the earth. He lays, therefore, one of his deepest, and foulest, and most devilish plots; a stratagem redolent of the Serpent, and instinct with the profoundest policies of hell. This is represented as consisting in a kind of symbolical metempsychosis or transmigration, in which the Dragon becomes the actuating spirit of another scarcely less baneful power. Conscious of being forced to withdraw in his own proper person from the scene in which he had so long reigned 'lord of the ascendant,' he resolves upon protruding upon the vacated stage another agent who should act as his vicegerent, and into whom he determines to transfuse the full measure of his own Satanic spirit and genius. This was no other than the seven-headed and ten-horned

Beast that arose out of the sea. It is through him as an instrument that he resolves to prosecute his war against the woman's seed. We may imagine therefore the Dragon of Paganism, when baffled in his previous designs, walking, like the hero of the Iliad, silent and thoughtful on the shore of the loud-sounding deep, or rather, perhaps, since the 'sea' in the Apocalypse is the symbol of multitudes of men in a state of commotion, as plunging into its abysses, and there secretly busying himself in *getting up* and sending forth this his portentous substitute, destined to supply his lack of disastrous service in working woe to the nations. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat (θρονον—*throne*), and great authority." Here is the act of abdication on the Dragon's part, and of investiture on that of the Beast. The Beast therefore acts by a delegated power. He comes forth as the commissioned organ and agent of the prime originator of moral and political ill to the nations of Christendom. This is no other than the same Roman empire metamorphosed into a nominally Christian dominion, and subsisting in its decem-regal form, when divided and split up into ten independent sovereignties, though still preserving an ecclesiastical unity, out of which arose the present dominant kingdoms of Europe, who are said to have agreed, at an early period, to give their power to the Beast.*

* Thus Horace, speaking of the Roman people, says;
'Bellua multorum es capitum.'

It would be altogether beside our present purpose to enter upon a detailed exposition of the allegorical Beast, the symbol of the collective body of the present leading European dynasties. We advert to the emblem only so far as may be necessary to illustrate the character, actions, or fortunes of his predecessor, the Dragon. It may be proper, however, to observe, that a prophetic limitation of the reign of the Beast is undoubtedly contained in the compass of the Revelation. Those upon whom his brutal and bestial violence, his grinding and wasting oppression was specially to fall, were to be given into his hand 'until a time, times, and half a time,' or for the space of 1260 years;* and

* "The original word which we translate *a time*, properly signifies any stated, fixed, or appointed time or *season*. It is therefore made use of, Lev. 23. 4. to denote those annual feasts which were every year fixed to one stated periodical revolution. And therefore may be understood in that place to signify the time of the periodical revolutions of the annual festivals, or *a year;* and accordingly the prophet Daniel, ch. 4. 16. 23. 25. makes use of the expression of *seven times* to denote *seven years*. And therefore in ch. 11. 13. Daniel in order to explain it, says the king of the north shall certainly return, and shall come *at the end of times, even years;* as it is in the original, though we translate it, *after certain years*. And Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, remarks, that the Rabbins understood the word *time* to denote a *year*, according to the language of the prophets. So that, according to this interpretation, *a time, times, and half a time*, or *one year* added to *two years and a half*, will be three years and a half. And as a Jewish year is supposed to consist of twelve months; and each month of thirty days, then *a time, times, and half a time*, or three times and a half, will be equivalent to 1260 days; as we shall find it exactly computed to be, when we come to

though the *precise* epoch of the commencement of that period may be difficult to be determined, yet we cannot err very widely in fixing it between the years 450 and 600; and in a matter of this nature to come within a century of the truth may be considered a sufficient approximation for all important purposes. Consequently, that we are now actually arrived at the very borders of that period which is to be signalized by the winding up of the grand despotic drama that has been for ages enacting in transatlantic Christendom, there cannot be the shadow of a reasonable doubt. It is only in this fact that we find an adequate solution of the phenomena which are now displaying themselves on so broad a scale in the political heavens and earth of the eastern continent. These commotions are to be regarded in no other light than as an incipient fulfilment of the inspired oracles, predicting the utter downfall of every system of government and religion which wars upon the liberties of mankind. We have in the disclosures of this book a genuine clew to the recent agitations of all the monarchical states; agitations arising solely from the efforts of the mass of the people to struggle into the assertion of their native rights, as the ancients fabled the earthquakes to be occasioned by the attempts of the imprisoned giants to throw off the superincumbent mountains heaped upon them.

The peculiar manner in which the foregoing interpre-

inquire into the Revelation of St. John, where *a time, times, and half a time* is mentioned as a space of time equivalent to *forty-two months*, or *one thousand two hundred and sixty days*." —*Clayton, Bish. of Clogher's Dissert. on Proph.* p. 78.

tation is made to bear upon the subject of the Millennium will be more fully disclosed in the sequel. At present we advert for a moment to the only plausible objection which, as far as we are able to perceive, can be urged against the construction put in the preceding pages upon the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse.

As the charge given to John in the outset of the mystical visions of this book is thus worded,—"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter,"—it may be said, That this division of the contents of the Revelation into the two great branches of things present and things future, necessarily forbids the application of any of the symbols to events that were long since past at the time of the writing of the book, and consequently that our interpretation of the symbol of the Dragon, which we have carried up to the remotest ages of antiquity, must necessarily be at variance with the acknowledged structure of the apostle's prophecy. In reply to this objection, we readily admit that as a *general character* of the Apocalypse this division is plainly observed; the three first chapters, containing the epistles to the seven churches, having a primary reference to the things which then were, while the subsequent portions of the book are occupied mainly with the prospective developement of the leading fates of the church and the world. But we are not prepared to admit the assumption, that nothing but prophetic matter can be introduced into a prophetic vision. For what was the case with Daniel? Did he behold the rise of the Roman empire *prospectively* when he beheld the emer-

gence of its symbol in the fourth beast from the troubled sea? Far from it. He beheld it *retrospectively*, as his vision of the four great beasts was vouchsafed to him about the year before Christ 555; but Rome was founded according to Varro in the year before Christ 753; so that the prophet, if we reckon from the time when he saw this vision, must have beheld the rise of the Roman beast *retrospectively*, though he viewed his exploits through the period of 1260 years *prospectively*. In like manner, we consider the vision in the chapter before us as having at once a *retrospective* and a *prospective* bearing, in which respect it forms an exception to the general tissue of the *res prophetica* of the book, and, we believe, the only exception. But as the main scope of the Holy Spirit in this part of the visions was to acquaint us with the origin, the reign, and the overthrow of the Beast, nothing could be more natural than to trace the symbolical extraction of the Beast from the Dragon his predecessor, and if the Dragon were introduced at all, it was equally natural that the symbol should be so constructed as to embrace the whole term of his hieroglyphic existence, however far back into former ages it might reach. The truth is, if the view which we have given of the intended mutual relation of the Dragon and the Beast of the Apocalypse be well founded, and admitted by the reader, the objection above stated can occasion no real difficulty. The fact which it contemplates is precisely such as might be expected. Nor will a single exception militate with the general uniformity of character by which the oracles of the Apocalypse are marked.—One or two reflections

may not unsuitably conclude the present division of our work.

1. The train of remark submitted to the reader in the foregoing exposition may have the effect, it is presumed, of deepening the conviction, *that the religion of the Bible is no foe to civil freedom;* that it can never be made, without the most flagrant perversion, the pander to oppression in any sense or in any degree. That Christianity has been made, by abuse, an engine of the most dire and diabolical persecution is unhappily put beyond the possibility of being questioned. The history of the ages of darkness furnishes a dreary and soul-sickening record of the fact. But that this circumstance affords the least argument of the legitimate tendencies of the gospel of Jesus cannot be maintained for a moment. The true and essential genius of Christianity repudiates with mortal abhorrence every alliance with civil power which would convert her into an engine of disastrous domination. Can the mystical woman of the vision fall in love with the terrific Dragon by whom she is assaulted? Are they not set in the most direct antagonism with each other? And under this significant imagery is not the brandmark of eternal reprobation set upon the entire apparatus of despotism? Is not its final overthrow, its utter extinction, clearly predicted in the oracles of the prophets?—and that too as an indispensable prerequisite to the final prevalence of the Gospel? How then can Christianity be friendly to or compatible with a system upon the ruins of which it is destined to rise, and the annihilation of which is the signal of its own success? The truth is, the spirit of

Christianity is not more opposed to vice than it is to vassalage; to moral corruption than to political degradation.

2. Shall not a more favorable impression be begotten in behalf of Christianity from the fact, *that it contemplates man not merely in his individual, but in his social capacities and interests?*—that in the amplitude of its beneficence it takes cognizance of those great and massive calamities which weigh upon the welfare of society; which have encumbered and retarded the march of the human mind; which have hung their ponderous weights upon the wheels of its progress;—in a word, that it abounds with predictions and promises, not only of the removal of those evils which encompass and annoy the individual believer, but of those also which have been the most signal curses to the communities of the earth? We repeat it then, that we are authorized to regard in the light of the accomplishment of the divine counsels the existing commotions which are causing the dynasties of Europe to totter on their rotten bases, and which are prompting the monarchs to clap their hands to their heads to hold on their crowns. Potentates are perplexed by the signs in heaven and the signs on earth. But why? Simply because God has illustriously arisen, and begun to show to the world *that the Gospel is the Genius of Universal Emancipation.* The human race is awakening to the conviction, that there is not a throne on earth but is built upon the prostrate liberties of mankind; and kings have cause to tremble at the results of the discovery. It is for this reason that they dread to refer themselves to 'the coming on of time.'

"Coming events cast their shadows before," and they are filled with secret apprehensions of an impending stroke which shall fall with resistless weight upon the coronets of despots, and scatter their diamonds in the dust. It is then to the pages of this precious revelation that we are to look for a key to the signs of the times; for a solution of all the marvels connected with that *magnus ordo rerum*, that stupendous moral and political revolution, which is so rapidly changing the face of human affairs, and introducing the indestructible empire of righteousness. It is on this account only that we deem the explication of the hieroglyphics of the Apocalypse as at all important. Viewed in any other light than as affording an index to the true character of the period in which we live, and its connected duties, we might as well bestow our labour in laying before our readers, for the purpose of comment, the imagery of the Shield of Achilles, or of the Zodiac of Dendera, or the architectural details of Solomon's Temple. But when rightly construed, the mystic shadows of the Seer of Patmos resolve themselves, like the hand-writing on the walls of Belshazzar's palace, into the death-doom of despotism, and the Magna Charta of the liberties of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF THE MILLENNIUM STATED AND CONFIRMED.

The Connection of the twentieth Chapter of the Revelation with the preceding portions of the Book stated—The Identity of the Dragon throughout the Apocalypse maintained—The Binding of the Dragon explained—Its date determined—Confirmed by History—Particulars of the symbolic Imagery further elucidated—Symbol of the Bottomless Pit or Abyss explained—Opinions of Lightfoot, Turretin, Mastricht, and Marck quoted—Satan's deceiving the Nations explained—Whether the Millennium to consist of a thousand literal years—Explication of the Thrones, and of the Souls of the Martyrs seen in the Vision, and of their Living and Reigning with Christ a thousand years.

REVELATION CH. XX.

1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4. And I saw thrones, and

hey sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: nd I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which ad not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither ad received his mark in their foreheads, or in their ands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thou- sand years. 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again ntil the thousand years were finished. This is the first esurrection. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part n the first resurrection: on such the second death hath o power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, nd shall reign with him a thousand years. 7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8. And shall go out to deceive he nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

A fresh vision of the Dragon here opens upon us. We are now called to contemplate him in an ulterior stage of degradation. In the allegorical narrative already considered we have seen him discomfited in the contest with the celestial legions of Michael, and vio- lently precipitated from heaven to earth. But, as if de-

termined to avenge the ignominy of his defeat, we left him still plotting against the mystical Woman, aiming to compass her destruction by disemboguing a flood of waters from his mouth; and, when baffled in this attempt, instituting a stupendous scheme of persecution against her seed through the instrumentality of the Beast, to whom he delivered up his seat and his power.

From that time, it will be observed by the careful reader of the Apocalypse, the Dragon himself retires from the stage; the scope of the prophetical visions being henceforth occupied mainly with the pernicious doings and the retributive destiny of his septemcephalous successor through the space of the seven ensuing chapters. In the close of the nineteenth, immediately preceding the portion which we have quoted, the final catastrophe of the secular imperial Beast and of the ecclesiastical False Prophet is expressly detailed. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth (rather, '*even* the kings of the earth'), and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Having thus portrayed by these significant emblems the remediless doom of the Beast, and having consequently no more to say of him, the order of the visions is now reversed, and the prophet is carried back in the train of supernatural disclosure to the point where the history of the Dragon had been in-

terrupted to make way for that of his vicegerent the Beast. In accordance with a feature of the sacred writings of incessant occurrence, in which events, whether historically or symbolically related, are transposed out of their just chronological order, the thread of the story is resumed and continued in the twentieth chapter.* The Dragon had acted a part too prominent and momentous to be so summarily dismissed from among the actors of the mystical drama. Nor did his machinations by any means cease with his personal withdrawment from the scene of his former exploits. Very important events, the effect of his procurement, were yet to be brought about; and in order that a connected and unbroken view of his operations and his fates might be recorded for the benefit of the church, the symbolical history remounts to the period of his sending forth upon the territories of Christendom his bestial substitute, and embraces in the present vision all the chronological

* "It is a well-known and well-grounded maxim among the Jews, that "non est prius et posterius in Scripturâ." Their meaning in it is this,—that the order and place of a text as it stands in the Bible doth not always infer or enforce the very time of the story, which the text relateth; but that sometimes, —nay it occurreth very oft,—stories are laid out of their natural and chronical place, and things are very frequently related before, which, in order of time, occurred after: and so 'e contra.' Nor is this transposition and dislocation of times and texts proper to the evangelists only,—but the same Spirit that dictated both the Testaments, hath observed this course in both the Testaments alike: laying texts, chapters, and histories out of the proper place in which, according to natural chronical order, they would have lain."—*Lightfoot's Works*, vol. ii. p. 61.

space between that and the time of his ultimate perdition, when he too is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to which the Beast and the False Prophet had been already adjudged. So that, in fact, the vision of the twentieth chapter of the Revelation is to be considered, as far as the events shadowed forth are concerned, as connecting itself immediately with that of the twelfth; and a more important clew to the genuine structure of this wonderful book cannot, we believe, be laid before the student of prophecy.

In attempting, therefore, to fix the legitimate sense of the symbols here employed, the first position which we assume, and which, if we mistake not, will inevitably draw after it the whole interpretation that follows, is, *the identity of the Dragon which is bound with the Dragon which was cast out of heaven.* Unless this point be conceded in the outset, it will be in vain to hope ever to attain to a satisfactory solution of the prophetic enigmas of this book. If the Dragon or the Devil is to be regarded as a hieroglyphic in one portion of the Apocalypse, we affirm that he is to be so viewed in every other portion; otherwise we are left in the mazes of inextricable confusion in every attempt to unravel the mysteries which it contains.* But that this assumption, in-

* "There is another thing which particularly deserves attention, and which, as it appears to me, must materially contribute to settle the question relative to the time of the vision: the power which is here described as chained, is denominated the Dragon; but this is no new character; and may we not from preceding scenes learn some of the circumstances of his history? In the 12th chapter he is introduced and styled the Old Ser-

stead of resting on mere conjecture, is in fact based upon the unequivocal declarations of the sacred text, will be

pent, the Devil, and Satan; and in the 20th he makes his appearance again, when precisely the same terms are employed to characterize this symbolical personage; the Dragon is THE OLD SERPENT, THE DEVIL, AND SATAN. Must it not then be the same Dragon in both places? Do we not find the same names, the same titles, and the same attributes? And can it be supposed that the Spirit of prophecy would give the same description where the symbolical existence was not the same? The term Dragon cannot have a literal signification, and when symbolically employed it must on deliberate reflection seem surprising that it should have two different senses in the same book, composed by the same author. Nothing but the supposed necessity of supporting a preconceived opinion could have been the origin of such an expedient. But the Dragon of the Apocalyptic Writer is the same symbolical personage wherever he appears. In the twelfth chapter he is represented as having seven heads and ten horns, with crowns on his heads. This, in the language of hieroglyphics, plainly expresses the Paganism of the Roman empire. In another place, an interpreting angel informs us, that the 'seven heads are seven mountains,' on which mountains Rome was built; and in the chapter to which reference has just been made, a conflict is described between Michael and his angels, and the Dragon and his angels, the issue of which was that the Dragon was cast unto the earth. Now I am not aware that there is any difference of opinion among the interpreters of prophecy relative to this conflict. It is admitted, that in this contest, Paganism was overcome, was hurled from the seat of empire, was excluded from having any part in the management of public affairs, and finally the rabble of the Pantheon were exiled from the Roman territory. But according to commentators and the expositors of prophecy it would seem, that the Dragon, on his defeat, exile, and imprisonment, underwent an astonishing metamorphosis. The Dragon, acknowledged to be Paganism at his first appearance in the prophetic scenery, becomes the Devil personally,

obvious from the bare inspection of the two following passages ranged in juxtaposition :—

Rev. xii. 9.	Rev. xx. 2, 3.
"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."	"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years—that he should deceive the nations no more."

This must of necessity remove all doubt as to the perfect equivalency of the symbols in the two visions. If then, as we have endeavoured to show, the term Dragon, Devil, or Satan, as used by John in the Revelation, must be understood, not as the literal appellation of the person of the Tempter, or the prince of fallen spirits, but as the mystic emblem of *despotism and idolatry united*; the true idea of Paganism, the inference is irresistible, that the binding of the Dragon or of Satan for the space of a thousand years must imply something more than the mere restraining of what is usually denominated 'Satanic influences.' It is in fact but a *figurative mode of announcing the suppression of Paganism for a definite term of years;* not indeed its *universal* suppression, but its banishment from the bounds of Christendom during the period specified, as will be more fully evinced

the Devil himself, the Prince of the power of the air. This certainly exhibits a strange latitude of interpretation: but by what authority or on what grounds is this liberty taken? Are there any canons or principles of interpretation which will sanction such a transformation? Can the symbols of prophecy be made to signify first one thing, and then another, according to the fancy of those who undertake to explain them? At this rate, symbolical language would be a mass of uncertainties, more vague in its import than the oracles of heathenism."—*Vint's New Illustr. of Proph.* p. 249, 250.

in the sequel. That this language should have been interpreted by the great mass of expositors in its most literal import, as implying that Satan should be confined in hell a thousand years, and his temptations during that period held in abeyance, and that they should have constructed upon this circumstance a theory of the Millennium distinguished by a state of the church and of the world all but absolutely sinless, can be accounted for only from the fact, that they have conducted their investigations upon principles which disregarded the most obvious laws of symbolical exegesis, and which were equally abhorrent to the dictates of sound reason. For freedom from temptation detracts from the value of obedience just so far as it exists. The strength and the worth of the pious principle in men is to be estimated by the counter-solicitations which it overcomes, and we know not that any state of the Christian church is predicted, in which men shall be delivered from the operation of those incentives to sin which are inseparable from the constitution of their nature as moral agents. Indeed, it may be affirmed, that the most pure and perfect, the most prosperous and glorious, state of the church in this world would be that in which the greatest strength of temptation to evil should co-exist with the most vigorous resistance to it; and this would be a state in which Satan, instead of being bound and hindered from putting forth his ordinary influences, would be most free and rampant, and would ply his hellish arts with most untiring activity. Into such incongruities are we led by giving a *literal* interpretation to *symbolical* terms. But suppose, on the other hand, the lan-

guage in the passage before us to be interpreted in consistency with the ascertained import of the same symbols in other places, and an easy and natural sense at once discloses itself under the figured diction of the prophet. If the Dragon be *Paganism personified*, then his being seized, bound, and incarcerated for a thousand years, must necessarily signify some powerful restraint laid in the providence of God upon this baneful system of error, by which its prevalence, through the above-mentioned period, is vastly weakened, obstructed, and confined to narrow limits, though not utterly destroyed.

The question, therefore, whether this period be already past or yet future, resolves itself into another question purely historical. Has there already occurred in the annals of the Christian world—for the book of Revelation has mainly to do with the territories of Christendom—an extended tract of time during which the system of Pagan delusions was suppressed, and the fabric of civil and ecclesiastical oppression represented by the Beast and the False Prophet prevailed in its stead? But this is a question which the veriest novice in the history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and of those nations which branched out of its dismembered fragments, is at once prepared to answer. No facts in the chronicles of the past are more notorious, than that Paganism under Constantine and his successors did, after a desperate struggle, succumb to Christianity in its triumphant progress; and that the religion of the Gospel, after subsisting for one or two centuries posterior to the age of Constantine in a state of com-

parative purity, did gradually become corrupt in doctrine, carnal and secular in spirit, and arrogant in its claims, till finally it allied itself to the civil power in a union which gave birth to the ecclesiastico-politico dominion of the Roman pontificate, for so many centuries the paramount scourge of Europe. As it is unquestionable, therefore, that the ascendency of Paganism in the Roman empire was succeeded by that of Antichristianism, symbolically denoted by the Beast's succeeding the Dragon, so we are led to consider the binding of the Dragon, i. e. the suppression of Paganism, as commencing about the time of the rise of the Beast, and nearly coinciding with the first thousand years of his reign.

This may strike the reader as a very revolting conclusion. To represent the Apocalyptic Millennium, which he has always conceived as but another name for the golden age of the church, as actually synchronizing with the most calamitous period of her annals, will no doubt do violence to his most cherished sentiments respecting that distinguished era. But this conclusion we know not how to avoid, nor do we see how any one can avoid it who admits the premises on which it rests. For certainly the millennial ligation of the Dragon must either coincide with a thousand years of the reign of the Beast, as we maintain, or it must succeed it. But if the latter, then we have a break in the prophetical history of the Dragon or Paganism, of between one and two thousand years, in relation to the events of which we are left in utter ignorance. By the former interpretation, the chain is preserved unbroken from its

earliest origin to its final annihilation. Besides, by interpreting the period of Satan's binding as yet future, we encounter a textual difficulty of no trifling character. In Rev. 12. 12. after the close of the contest in heaven, it is said;—'Wo to the inhabiters of the earth and the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, *because he knoweth that he hath but a short time;*' i. e. he knoweth that after his fall from heaven, but a short time will intervene anterior to his binding and confinement in the bottomless pit, as represented in the vision under consideration. But if he came down to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea in his dejection from the symbolical heaven in the days of Constantine, and yet his binding was not to take place till near two thousand years after that event, with what propriety could it be said that he knew his *time was short?* The time would in truth be long, very long, when compared with the whole period embraced in the visions of the Apocalypse. Now by our mode of interpretation we allow from one to two centuries for the term of the Devil's execution of his designs against the *subjects* of the Roman empire subsequent to his expulsion from the *seat of supremacy* in the government, and previous to his bindin g; and this strikingly corresponds with the statement of Gibbon. Speaking of the reign of Constantine, he says; "Every motive of authority and fashion, of interest and reason, now militated on the side of Christianity; *but two or three generations elapsed before their victorious influence was universally felt.*"* The same writer elsewhere remarks, that "the

* Decl. and Fall, p. 332.

generation which arose in the world after the promulgation of the imperial laws, was attracted within the pale of the catholic church: *and so rapid, yet so gentle, was the fall of Paganism, that only twenty-eight years after the death of Theodosius, the faint and minute vestiges were no longer visible to the eye of the legislator.*"* The death of Theodosius occurred A. D. 395, and we suppose the binding of Satan to have commenced somewhere between this and A. D. 450, but the precise year we pretend not to determine. The rise of the Beast is to be fixed at a somewhat later period; the exact date of that epoch also we leave to be settled by those who feel themselves competent to do it. The expiration of the thousand years, according to this computation, will nearly coincide with the establishment of the Turkish power in Western Asia in consequence of the capture of Constantinople, A. D. 1453; and how entirely the history of that period and that people answers the import of the prophetic symbols will be shown in the sequel, in our explication of the mystic post-millennial Gog and Magog.—We shall now enter upon a more minute consideration of the language of this remarkable vision.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand." An angel, in the language of symbols, is used to denote any agent or agency, terrestrial or celestial, by which the purposes of the Almighty are accomplished. In the passage before us, the angel is but an-

* Decl. and Fall, p. 469.

other name for *the power of the Gospel, putting itself forth through the commissioned ministers of the Roman government, which had now become Christian.* As we are taught by our Lord himself, that no one can 'enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first *bind the strong man*,' so it was nothing but the divine potency of the religion of the cross, which could avail to dislodge the system of Paganism from its strongholds, and annul the pernicious influence which it had for ages exerted upon the human mind. This hitherto unprecedented revolution, which had long been gradually working its way to a crisis, received, as we have already intimated, its final consummation in or shortly after the reign of Theodosius. "The ruin of Paganism, in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition; and may therefore be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind."* The reader of Gibbon will find in the concluding part of the twenty-eighth chapter of the Decline and Fall a more valuable commentary on this part of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse than is furnished by all the professed expositors who have 'taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of the things' contained in it. "The gods of antiquity," says he, "were dragged in triumph at the chariot-wheels of Theodosius. In a full meeting of the senate, the emperor proposed, according to the forms of the republic, the important question, whether the worship of Jupiter or that of Christ should

* Decl. and Fall, p. 462.

be the religion of the Romans. On a regular division of the senate, Jupiter was condemned and degraded by the sense of a very large majority."—"The pious labor which had been suspended near twenty years since the death of Constantine, was vigorously resumed, and finally accomplished, by the zeal of Theodosius. Whilst that warlike prince yet struggled with the Goths, not for the glory but the safety of the republic, he ventured to offend a considerable party of his subjects, by some acts which might perhaps secure the protection of heaven, but which must seem rash and unreasonable in the eye of human prudence. The success of his first experiments against the Pagans encouraged the pious emperor to reiterate and enforce his edicts of proscription; and every victory of the orthodox Theodosius contributed to the triumph of the Christian and Catholic faith."*—A 'key' being an instrument used for the double purpose of opening or shutting, is in itself a symbol of equivocal import. It signifies, however, either the power to prevent or to perform the action to which it is applied, according to the circumstances of the case. Thus the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. 16. 19. represented as given to Peter in the name of all the other apostles, denotes the ministerial or declarative power conferred upon them of proclaiming the terms on which men were to be admitted into the gospel kingdom, and invested with a share in its spiritual blessings. So in Luke 11. 5. the taking away of 'the key of knowledge' implies the assumption on the part of

* Decl. and Fall, p. 464, 465.

those who are charged with it of a magisterial right either to grant or to withhold from the mass of the people the means or the power of attaining knowledge; so that the term still conveys the idea of *official prerogative*. A passage still more pertinent to our purpose occurs Is. 22. 22. 'And the *key* of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open;' rendered in the Chaldee Targum,—"And I will deliver the key of the house of the sanctuary, and the *government* of the house of David into his hand." Upon this passage Lowth remarks;—"That as the robe and the baldric (girdle) mentioned in the preceding verse were *the ensigns of power and authority*, so likewise was *the key* the *mark of office*, either sacred or civil." The import of the expression doubtless is, that Eliakim should act by an *authoritative commission*, as the prime minister, or rather perhaps the high steward, of the house of David, having all the subordinate officials of the royal palace so entirely under his control, and so obedient to his nod, that his will was to be to them an absolute law. The laying of the key therefore upon his shoulder was merely the symbol of the transfer of this delegated authority; which still farther illustrates the import of the *key* as a hieroglyphic.* Again

* In like manner, in the classic writers, the priestess of Juno is called κλειδοῦχος Ἥρας, *key-bearer of Juno*. Æsch. Suppl. 299. A female high in office under a great queen has the same title: Καλλιθόη κλειδοῦχος Ολυμπιάδος βασιλείης, *Callithœ the key-bearer of the queen Olympias*. Anc. Phorion. ap. Clem. Alex. p. 418. This mark of office was likewise among the Greeks, as here in

it is said, Rev. 9. 1. 'And I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the *key* of the bottomless pit.' The office of the key in this instance was to open instead of shut, but it still throws light upon the general symbol. It denotes in the present connexion a *providential license* given to some apostate agent, represented by the falling star, to be the means of releasing from confinement some destructive power which was to issue forth and to desolate a considerable portion of the Apocalyptic earth. The *key* is mentioned in order to indicate that the work executed by the prophetic agents was performed in consequence of an *official designation* emanating from a higher power. This is clearly implied also in the force of the word ἐδόθη—*was given*. The grand event depicted by the symbol was undoubtedly the irruption of the Saracens under Mohammed and his successors against the Roman empire. "This," says Daubuz, "expresses well a hidden multitude of confused men arising on a sudden, and breaking out to make incursions, as a subterraneous flood when broken out; and that according to the analogy that the *Deep* or the *Sea* signifies a multitude in war and tumult, and the *Pit* the most vile, lowest, and contemptible sort of men, like the slaves that are in the pit. I think then that the Holy Ghost did design to show by the key of the bottomless gulf which was given to this star fallen from heaven upon the earth, that this rebellious prince or upstart would set the slaves

Isaiah, borne on the shoulder, wherefore it is said of the priestess of Ceres, κατωμάδιαν ἴχε κλεῖδα, *she had a key upon her shoulder*.—Callim. Ceres, v. 45.

at liberty, and all such sorts of despicable men; and by setting himself at the head of them, lead on that mixed multitude to prosecute the purposes mentioned hereafter: carrying on their designs by a continual and prodigious war, and incursions upon others. *The Saracens were as hell broke loose.* Mahomet was sent to punish corrupted Christendom with the vilest sort of men, the most despicable nation."* It will be seen in the sequel that we differ from this commentator, for whom we have greater respect than for any other, in our explication of the symbol of the 'bottomless pit,' but the citation is important for our main purpose.

From what has now been said, we are better prepared to understand the drift of the emblematic scenery under consideration. The circumstance of the angel's coming down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit in his hand, denotes that the action to which his coming has reference, viz. the apprehension, binding, and imprisonment of the Dragon, was to be performed by a *delegated power, an authorized and official ministry,* or in other words, *in consequence of an imperial edict.* The evident scope of this part of the vision is to point out to us the fact, that the power symbolized by the Dragon was forcibly expelled from the territories in which it had hitherto subsisted, and that through the instrumentality of some commissioned organ acting in the name of the supreme authority. Now as a matter of historical verity, Paganism did not *go out* of the Roman empire, but it was *driven out.* The majesty of

* Perpet. Comment. p. 398.

the law commanded its expulsion, and the reader who may have access to the Theodosian Code containing the enactments against Paganism, is in possession of the genuine 'key' *of* the passage and *to* the passage before us. The historian so often cited, speaking of the attempts of the idolaters by subtle distinctions to elude the laws enacted against the heathen sacrifices, says,—"These vain pretences were swept away by the last edict of Theodosius, which inflicted a deadly wound upon the superstition of the Pagans. This prohibitory law is expressed in the most absolute and comprehensive terms. 'It is our will and pleasure,' says the emperor, 'that none of our subjects, whether magistrates or private citizens, however exalted or however humble may be their rank and condition, shall presume, in any city or in any place, to worship an inanimate idol by the sacrifice of a guiltless victim.' "*—"As the temples had been erected for the purpose of sacrifice, it was the duty of a benevolent prince to remove from his subjects the dangerous temptation of offending against the laws which he had enacted. *A special commission* was granted to Cynegius, the prætorian præfect of the east, and afterward to the Counts Jovius and Gaudentius, two officers of distinguished rank in the west, *by which they were directed to shut the temples, to seize or destroy the instruments of idolatry, to abolish the privileges of the priests*, and to confiscate the consecrated property for the benefit of the emperor, of the church, or of the army."† This then was the binding of the Dragon,

* Decl. and Fall, p. 468.

† Ibid. p. 465. Among the monuments of idolatry which

another name for the authoritative suppression of Paganism, an event which from its very nature cannot be tied down to the space of a month or a year, though we may still approach near enough to a definite epoch to answer all the grand purposes of exposition. So conclusive is the proof that if the Dragon be Paganism, the millennium, which was to be mainly distinguished by his binding, is long since past.

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season." The Greek term ἄβυσσος, translated in our version 'bottomless pit,' is derived from the privative α and βυθος, which in the Ionic dialect is changed into βυσσος. It is originally an adjective, signifying *deep*, *profound*, *unfathomable*, *immense*, *inaccessible*. As a substantive with χωρα, *region*, understood, it denotes a place of indefinite, indescribable depth or extent, a place incapable of being explored. It occurs in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament thirty-nine times, in thirty-six of which the original Hebrew term to which it answers is תְּהוֹם usually rendered *the deep*, *the great deep*, &c. In the New Testament it occurs nine times; seven of the passages in which it is met with being in the Reve-

were destroyed on this occasion, the historian mentions particularly an *emblematic* monster, having the head and body of a *serpent*, branching into three tails, which were again terminated by the triple heads of a dog, a lion, and a wolf.

lation. In a majority of the cases above specified it cannot be doubted that it contains an allusion to waters; in others it is equally evident that it refers to cavernous recesses in the earth, in which there is no implication of the presence of waters. Thus Rom. 10. 7. "Who shall descend *into the deep* (Gr. εις την αβυσσον), that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead?" where the allusion is plainly to the sepulchral vaults in which the dead were entombed. So in Rev. 9. 2. where it is said, "he opened the bottomless pit (Gr. το φρεαρ της αβυσσου—*the well, pit, or shaft of the abyss*)," as it is not said that water issued forth, but first smoke and then locusts, which we know are not of aquatic origin, it is doubtful whether the 'abyss' in this connexion, literally understood, denotes any thing more than a vast subterranean recess with which the pit or well had a secret or direct communication, as some of the wells in Egypt communicate with the excavated chambers of the Pyramids. In like manner it may be justly questioned whether the 'abyss,' in the passage before us, in which the Dragon was to be shut up, will admit of being understood in any other sense than as an immense cavern in the earth, such as were employed among the nations of the east for the double purpose of places of interment for the dead, and confinement for state criminals. As to the sense popularly affixed to the phrase, in which it is considered as an appellation of the place of torment for the wicked after death, or as synonymous with 'the infernal regions,' we find not a single passage either in the Old or the New Testament by which that import is sustained. It is said, indeed, Luke 8. 30, 31. that the devils

(demons), which had entered into the demoniac who called himself *Legion*, "besought him that he would not command them, *εις την αβυσσον απελθειν—to go away into the abyss.*" But it may be questioned, in regard to this passage, whether the allusion be not to the very abyss spoken of in this vision of the Revelation, in which the Dragon, as the mystical denomination of the whole system of ancient demonology, was to be cast; or whether, in other words, this request was not prompted by the anticipation of that dreaded doom which had been plainly preintimated for ages before in the oracular shadowings of the Old Testament prophets; as the visions of the Apocalypse are but a developement of the darker mysteries of prior revelations. But whether this be so or not, the abyss into which the unclean spirits deprecated being cast cannot well be considered a body of water, as otherwise they would hardly have petitioned to be permitted to enter into the herd of swine which rushed at once into the lake.

But if such be the *literal* import of the 'abyss' which was to constitute the Dragon's prison-house, the question arises, What is its *symbolical* significancy?—for it can no more be doubted that the Abyss is a symbol, than that the Dragon himself is. Analogical consistency imperiously requires this view of the subject. In answer then to the question we observe, that as the Roman empire was to the apostle John and his contemporaries the known civilized world, and the stage on which were exhibited the different scenes of prophetic vision; so the Abyss, the place of the Dragon's confinement, was, if we mistake not, intended by the Spirit of prophecy to

signify the unknown world, comprising the immense, unexplored, undefined, boundless regions which stretched away beyond the limits of the Roman empire, particularly to the north and east, where Satan had long established his throne, where he ruled with undivided sway, and where idolatry in its most frightful and horrid forms has ever held a disastrous dominion. This affords a natural, easy, and consistent solution of the imagery of the vision. The binding and confinement of the Dragon in the Abyss is the expulsion of Paganism from the bounds of Christendom, and its restriction within the limits of certain regions which lay without the territorial platform of the Roman empire. Augustin seems to have had an inkling of the true sense of the symbol;—"Gentes igitur sunt, in quibus diabolum velut in abysso superius intellegebamus, inclusum"*—*There are nations, therefore, in which, as before explained, the devil was shut up as in an abyss.* But the pen of Gibbon, in describing the fact which we suppose to have constituted the accomplishment of this prophecy, would seem to have been guided by the Spirit of inspiration. "Before the age of Charlemagne, the Christian nations of Europe might exult in the possession of the temperate climates, of the fertile fields which produced corn, wine, and oil; *while the savage idolaters and their helpless idols were confined to the extremities of the earth, the dark and frozen regions of the north.*"†

Such then, if we rightly interpret the prophetic signs, is the scope of this vision. The Millennium of the

* August. De Civit. Dei, l. 20. c 11.

† Decl. and Fall, p. 609.

Apocalypse is but another name for that long interregnum which broke the extended term of the dominion of Paganism subsequent to the establishment of Christianity in the Roman world. It was in fact a millennial syncope of the vital vigour of that power which had before animated the governments of all nations coming within the limits of the empire of the Cæsars. How gross then the anachronism of placing this period near the end of the world!

But that the reader may have some guaranty that the adoption of this opinion will not of course throw him out of the range of all fellowship of sentiment with the Christian world, we shall here adduce the sanction of some eminent names who have advocated in effect the very theory we are now maintaining. Not that their authority is adequate to decide the question of its truth; but it is gratifying to find, when a particular conclusion has been arrived at by a process of reasoning conducted independently of all human authority, that other minds, for whose decisions we have great respect, have been led to form substantially the same judgment upon the points at issue.

Lightfoot, Brightman, and Usher are, we believe, the only English authors of eminence who have maintained that the Millennium of John is past. The former, in a sermon preached at Hertford Assizes, March, 1660, the text of which is Rev. 20. 4. holds the following language:—

"This portion of Scripture out of which I have taken my text is as much misconstrued and as dangerously misconstrued as any one portion of Scripture in all the

Bible. What work the millennary and fifth monarchists make upon this place I need not tell you. They look forward and make account that the things that are here spoken of their accomplishment and fulfilling are yet to come. I look backward and fear not to aver, that the things here spoken of have received their accomplishment long ago. They look forward and expect that the thousand years that are here mentioned are yet to begin; I look backward, and make no doubt that those thousand years ended and expired above half a thousand years since.

"The Apocalyptic writer speaks up that great and noble theme that all the prophets so divinely and comfortably harp upon—namely, the calling of the Gentiles, that they should come in out of their dark and deluded state, to the light and embracing of the gospel, and to become the church and people of the living God; that Christ, the great angel of the covenant, should by the power of the gospel chain up the devil, that he should deceive them no more as he had done. The mistakers I mention do either ignorantly or wilfully err about the subject handled here, and construe it to this sense—that the devil should be bound by Christ, that he should not persecute, disturb, and disquiet the church as he had done; but that all along these thousand years there should be only a time of peace and tranquillity, and not one cloud of disquietude or disturbance by the devil or his instruments eclipse it. A sense as far from the Holy Ghost's meaning as the east is from the west.

"There is not one word here of the devil's binding that he should not disturb the church, but of the devil's

binding that he should not deceive the nations. The devil had deceived and kept the poor heathen in deludedness by idols, oracles, false miracles, horrid mysteries of irreligiousness, and a thousand cozenages, for above two thousand years; namely, from their first casting off at the confusion of Babel, till the gospel was brought in among them by the apostles. By the gospel, Christ dissolves those charms of delusion, brings down idolatry, silences the devil's oracles and miracles, and chains up the devil from that power and liberty of deceiving all nations as he had done.

"He says the devil was chained up in this sense a thousand years, using a known expression of the Jews, and alluding to an opinion of theirs, partly that he might speak the more to be understood when he useth an expression so well known—and partly that he might face the mistake of the Jews in that opinion. It was their conceit and fancy that Messias, when he should come, should reign among the Jewish nation a thousand years, but as for the heathen he should destroy them. No, saith our Apocalyptic writer, his reigning a thousand years shall be among the nations or the Gentiles; and he shall not come to destroy the Gentiles, but to deliver them: to deliver them from the power and delusions of Satan—to chain up Satan that he shall deceive them no more as he had done; but that, whereas before for so long a time together they had been only taught of the devil, now they should all be taught of God. And if you begin to count the thousand years from the time that the gospel was first brought in among the Gentiles by Paul and Barnabas, and other of the apostles, you

will find that the end and expiring of them will fall to be in the very depth and thickness of popery; and then was the devil got loose again, and deceived the nations by as gross and wretched delusions as ever he had done before."*

We dissent from this learned writer in respect to the date which he assigns to the binding of Satan; for it is sufficiently clear from our preceding expositions that this event did not take place till after the war in heaven, and the casting down of the Dragon from thence, or in other words, till after the grand conflict of Christianity with Paganism, and the overthrow of the latter, which we have shown to have occurred in the reign of Constantine. This view of the subject is evidently required by the decorum of the symbols, for the prophet says,—"I saw an angel *come down from heaven*;" which certainly implies that the Dragon himself was not at this time *in* heaven, but had been cast down. His binding occurred at least a century after his dejection.

Among the continental writers who have treated this subject, the elder Turretin holds a conspicuous place, and his sentiments are thus expressed:—

"As the binding of Satan for a thousand years coincides with the thousand years in which the martyrs were to reign with Christ, if it should appear that the Millennium of Satan's binding is already past, from this very circumstance it will be clear that the reign of a thousand years has already elapsed, and is to be no more expected. But wherever this binding of Satan

* Lightfoot's Works, vol. vi. p. 255.

begin, whether from the incarnation of our Saviour, as some think, at which time the strong one was bound by a stronger, and his vessels taken from him and transferred out of darkness into the kingdom of light; or—from his passion and death, as appears best unto others, on which Satan was bound by Christ, the handwriting taken from him which was contrary to us, his head bruised and a triumph gained over him; or—at the destruction of Jerusalem, as others say, lest a reverence remaining for legal ceremonies should in any way impede the progress of the gospel; or—finally, at the accession of Constantine as emperor, which opinion is the most common, at which period the free exercise of religion was granted to Christians; and the consequence was, that Satan was no longer openly permitted to seduce the nations or persecute them through the furious cruelty of heathen emperors: wherever, I say, this binding begin, it is clear that the time is long since past, and is no more to be expected in future. But though in some intervals Satan was not so bound, but that he still brought various evils on the church; yet that prediction does not fail of its accomplishment, because the binding was not to be absolute, but limited."*

* "Ut *ligatio Satanæ* per mille annos coincidit annis, quibus Martyri cum Christo regnaturi sunt; si constet millennarium ligationis Satanæ jam lapsum esse, eo patebit regnum mille annorum jam præterisse, nec amplius esse expectandum. Undequaque autem ista ligatio Satanæ inchoetur; vel a Servatoris incarnatione, ut quibusdam placet, quo tempore fortis a fortiori ligatus est, et ei erepta sunt vasa, et e tenebris in regnum lucis translata, Mat. 12. 29; vel ab ejus passione et morte, ut aliis visum, in quâ ligatus est Satan per Christum, erepto ei

P. Mastricht, an eminent Professor of Theology at Utrecht, has expressed himself in similar language. "The thousand years," says he, "may be understood to have elapsed some time since, whether they be reckoned from the incarnation or death of our Savior, or from the destruction of Jerusalem, or from the death of Constantine the Great. If from the incarnation, the thousand years would cease under Sylvester II.; if from the crucifixion, under Benedict IX.; if from the commencement of Constantine's reign, under Boniface VIII., at the rise of the Ottoman power, and when the dreadful persecutions of the Waldenses were raging about the thirteenth century. So that the sense of the whole passage may be thus given: Satan, either from the incarnation of Christ, or rather from the reign of Constantine, was bound so far that he should not any more seduce whole nations to idolatry, or cause such bloody persecutions of Christians, until the time of

chirographo quod nobis contrarium erat, et contrito ejus capite, et triumpho de illo acto, Col. 2. 14, 15; Heb. 2. 14; vel in excidio Hierosolymitano, cum aliis, ne legalium obsoleta reverentia evangelii cursum quovis modo impediret; vel denique in Constantini M. imperio, ut pluribus probatur, quo tempori liberum Christianis concessum est religionis exercitium, effectumque, ut Satanæ non amplius liceret aperte et impune gentes seducere, et per grassantem imperatorum gentilium sævitiam persequi. Undecunque, inquam, ista ligatio inchoatur, liquet tempus hoc jamdudum practeriisse, nec in posterum esse amplius expectandum. Licet autem in istis intervallis non ita ligatus fuerit Satan, quin varia ad huc mala ecclesiæ intulerit; non desinit tamen oraculum istud complementum suum sortiri; quia ligatio ista non debuit esse absoluta sed limitata.—*F. Turretini Institut. Theol.* p. 650. 1791.

Boniface VIII. in the year *1300; then for a short time*, that is, till the period *of the* Reformation, he was let loose to seduce whole nations, partly by Antichrist, then prevailing greatly in the West, and partly by the Mohammedan power then extending its conquests."*

J. Marck, a distinguished divine of Leyden, thus states his opinion: "We believe that a space perhaps about a thousand years is intended: which began with the birth of Christ, or with his personal ministry, or at his resurrection, or even with the reign of Constantine, or at every one of these in succession, and flowed on till it broke forth into Antichristian and Mohammedan impiety, spreading more and still more. Satan was then bound by Christ more closely than before, by being impeded in seducing the nations; martyrs and other believers, as it respects their souls, living and

* Mille illi anni, dudum præterlapsi intelligi possunt, sive supputentur ab incarnatione, aut passione Servatoris; sive ab excidio Hierosolymitano; sive ab imperio Constantini Magni. Si ab incarnatione, desinent mille anni in Sylvestro secundo; si a passione, in Benedicto nono; si ab excidio Hierosolymitano, in Gregorio septimo; si ab initio Constantini M. in abortu Bonifacii octavi, et in ortu familiæ Ottomanicæ, et Waldensium funestis persecutionibus, circa seculum decimum tertium. Ut sensus loci universi emergat, Satanam, sui ab incarnatione Christi, seu potius ab imperio Constantini M. ligatum fuisse, eatenus, ut non amplius seduceret integras gentes ad idololatriam, aut persecutiones Christianorum tam cruentas, usque ad Bonifacium octavum, anno MCCC tum ad breve tempus, scil. usque ad reformationis tempus, solutum fuisse, ut seduceret integras nationes, partim per Antichristum, maxime tum invalescentem in Occidenti; partim per Mahummedanum, tum exoriens.—*Mastricht, Theol.* vol. i. p. 483. 1698.

reigning with Christ on his celestial throne, and forward to all eternity; while the other dead lived not again in a similar way at death, nor before it in a saving conversion on this earth."*

These extracts will, it is presumed, take off the odium of novelty from the interpretation now proposed, although they may fail to establish its justness to the mind of the reader. Indeed they are not adduced for that purpose. For this we rely exclusively upon the foregoing train of annotation upon the chapters which have come under review, and in which we now proceed.

"And set a seal upon him." The abyss, as we have before remarked, is represented by the prophet under the image of a great *pit* or *den*, such as slaves and prisoners were anciently confined in, as the prisons of the oriental nations are usually, like their graves, under ground, in which respect they differ from similar receptacles among the Europeans. Thus Is. 24. 22. 'And they shall be gathered together, as *prisoners* are

* Credimus innui circiter forte mille annorum spatium, quod vel a nativitate, vel a prædicatione, vel a resurrectione Christi, vel a Spiritûs effusione, vel a vastatione Jerosolymæa, vel etiam a Constantini imperio, vel ab his omnibus per gradus successivos, Antichristianam et Mahummedicam impietatem, ligato tum a Christo Satanâ magis quam antea, per impeditam gentium seductionem; viventibus et regnantibus martyribus ac reliquis fidelibus respectu animarum cum Christo in cœlesti throno, et in omnem porro æternitatem, dum non reviviscebant similiter in ipsa morte, nec salutari conversione ante cum his in terris, reliqui mortui.—*Comp. Theol.* p. 651. tert. ed. Amstelod. 1722.

gathered in the *pit*, and shall be shut up in the prison.' It is owing to this fact that graves are frequently compared to prisons, and prisons to graves, the latter being nothing else than subterranean excavations, vaulted and walled with stone, or cut out of the solid rock, and having a large stone to cover the aperture.* From this circumstance arose the application of the terms 'shutting' and 'sealing' to cells or caverns of this kind, of which the following instances afford a pertinent illustration, Dan. 6. 17. 'And a *stone* was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the *den*; and the king *sealed* it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.' Mat. 27. 59, 60, 66. 'And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he *rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre*, and departed.—So they went and made the sepulchre sure, *sealing the stone*, and setting a watch.' As therefore in these two passages it is said that a seal was added for greater security, so the angel is here said not only to have 'shut up' the Dragon, but also to have 'set a seal' upon him. It is observable also that *wells* were anciently closed in like manner, as is evident from the incident related Gen. 29. 2, 3. 'And

* This was the custom of the ancient Egyptians, and, as we learn from Homer, of the Phrygians too.

> Αἶψα δ' ἄρ' ἐς κοίλην κάπετον θέσαν· αὐτὰρ ὅπερθε
> Πυκοῖσιν λαίσσι κατεστορέσαν μεγάλοισι.—Iliad, ω. v. 797.
>
> Last o'er the urn the sacred earth they spread,
> And raised the tomb, memorial of the dead.—Pope.

a great *stone* was upon the *well's mouth*. And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth, in his place.' Thus Cant. 4. 12. the Bride is compared to a 'well shut up' to preserve its water pure from defilement, and to a 'fountain *sealed*'—πηγη ἐσφραγισμένη. The Hebrew חָתַם signifies both to 'shut' and to 'seal;' and Hesychius defines φραξαμενος, *having sealed*, by κλεισας, *having shut*. So the poet Aristophanes, whose plays abound with allegories, introduces Peace as having been before thrown into a dungeon, the entrance of which was blocked up with stones, to denote the difficulty of securing its presence among men. Indeed any thing that is said to be 'sealed' is supposed to be out of use and unknown till it is re-opened. Accordingly the *effectual restraint* laid upon Paganism during the period in question, answers, with great exactness, to the drift of the symbols employed, where the gradations in the process of the Dragon's seizure and confinement are very clearly marked: he is *taken—bound—cast into the abyss —shut up*—and *sealed*, and thus fully secured in what is afterward, v. 7. expressly termed his 'prison.'

"That he should deceive the nations no more." The *εθνη, nations*, here spoken of are the nations occupying the territories of the Roman empire or the people of Christendom, in contradistinction from the nations of the 'abyss,' or the idolatrous tribes lying without the limits of the imperial jurisdiction. These converted 'nations,' during the period specified, although they were to be subjected to the Beast, and brought under

the baleful influence of *a corrupt Christianity*, yet they were to be exempted from that peculiar form of 'deception,' or delusion, which consisted in the open embracing of the abominations of Paganism. There was much indeed of the *spirit* of Paganism in the corrupt doctrines and practices of the Romish church, for the ecclesiastical Beast is said to have '*spoke as the Dragon*,' but still it is not called in the prophecy by that name. The same body of men are nowhere said to be, at the same time, under the governance both of the Dragon and the Beast. They are the symbolical representatives of two distinct communities, the one nominally Christian, the other positively Pagan. They embrace therefore in reality the two grand divisions of mankind, the Christian and the Heathen, and in the respective fates of each we are instructed in the final destiny of those portions of these two great bodies which persist in rejecting the everlasting gospel preached by the angel flying through the midst of heaven, and in pertinaciously adhering to their fatal delusions.

But in what sense was the Dragon to be restrained from 'deceiving' the nations? The character of the power by which the 'deceit' is to be practised, will doubtless go far to determine the nature of the 'deceit' itself, and this we have already settled in our preceding explanations. The Dragon is Paganism; his 'deceiving' the nations, therefore, is his *seducing them into idolatry;* and the consequence of his being bound is a happy immunity from his diabolical arts enjoyed by those who were formerly his victims. This interpretation, however, of the original term πλανηση, *should de-*

ceive, it will be proper to confirm by adducing the usage of the sacred writers, and showing that it has unequivocally the sense of *doctrinal imposture*, or of *enticing men to the adoption of a false religion*. As the style of the Apocalypse is essentially Hebraic in its character, its only adequate illustration is to be drawn from the language of the O. T. Scriptures as rendered in the Septuagint version. The pertinency of the following citations will be too obvious to escape the most casual eye. Deut. 4. 19. 'And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven πλανηθεις προσκυνησης αυτοις—*being deceived shouldst worship them.*' Here is obviously *enticement to idolatry*. Again, Deut. 30. 17. 'But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but πλανηθεις προσκυνησης θεοις ετεροις—*being deceived shalt worship other gods.*' Deut. 11. 28. 'And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but πλανηθητε απο της οδου—*are deceived, or err, out of the way*, which I command you this day, to go after other gods which ye have not known.' Deut. 13. 5. 'And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken πλανησαι σε απο κυριου του θεου σου—*to deceive thee from (following) the Lord thy God.*' 2 Kings 21. 9. 'And Manasseh επλανησεν αυτους, *seduced them* to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed.' The nature of this 'seduction' is fully explained in the preceding verses, where Manasseh is said to have 'reared altars for Baal'—'made a grove'—'worshipped all the host of heaven'—'made his sons pass through the fire'—

'set up a graven image in the house of the Lord,' &c. implying the complete institution of idolatrous worship. Jer. 23. 13. 'And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, *και επλάνησαν τον λαόν μου—and caused my people to err*;' i. e. by teaching them false doctrines. Thus also in the New Testament, Mat. 24. 11. 'And many false prophets shall rise, and *πλανησουσι πολλους—shall deceive many*;' i. e. by misleading them from the truth. Mat. 24. 24. 'Insomuch, that if it were possible they should *πλανησαι—deceive* the very elect.' John 7. 12. 'Some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay, *πλανᾳ τον οχλον—he deceiveth the people*;' i. e. he instils error into their minds. The word occurs in the same sense of *perverse religious teaching* in several instances in the compass of the Revelation. Thus Rev. 2. 20. 'Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and *πλανασθαι εμους δουλους—to seduce my servants* to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.' Rev. 13. 14. 'And *πλανᾳ deceiveth* them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do,' i. e. inveigles into idolatrous worship.

Daubuz, after adverting to the opinion of Lactantius and Augustin that there would still be idolaters remaining on earth during the entire lapse of the millennial age, intimates that in his own judgment, "These nations shall be, during the imprisonment of Satan, in so small a number, and so remote from the Holy City, and subject to the converted nations—being perhaps such as lie now in the utmost boundaries of the inhabitable world

nd so barbarous and inaccessible to the rest of nkind, and at the same time so feeble in comparison the true Christians, that they shall neither dare nor able to disturb the peace of Christ's kingdom during the time of the millennium."* But if such were to the state of things during the long period of Satan's traint, it may be thought that a melancholy contrast presented in the fact, that after its termination he was ain to be let loose from his prison, to go forth in all potency of his infernal machinations, to re-establish dominion over the infatuated minds of men, and act over again the same sad scenes of despotic elty and idolatrous delusion which marked his ancient endancy. But the prophetic oracles afford no und for such a sombre vein of anticipation. It is ious that it was but to a very limited extent that an, subsequent to his liberation from the Abyss, uld be permitted to renew his diabolical arts. It is l, indeed, that he should be 'loosed,' yet it was to only 'for a little season,' nor are we any where en to understand, that the church of Christ should again effectually overcome by her old enemy. e doubtless was to continue triumphant to the end of world. The event announced points rather to an *argement of territory* than to an *increase of subjects* the part of Paganism. Numerous hordes of barba- ns might indeed issue forth from the regions of the byss,' and plant their heathen ensigns all around the cincts of Christendom, overrunning perhaps her

* Perpet. Comment. p. 924.

fairest provinces, but it would be an *invasion*, not a *mission*, a project for making *captives*, rather than *proselytes*; and though the people of God might in consequence be compelled within narrower limits, yet there is no intimation that they were to prove apostate. If they fell under the jurisdiction of the liberated Dragon, it was to be as the sheep fall under the power of the prowling wolf. All the advantages which Paganism should gain over Christianity, were to be attained by *conquest* and not by *conversion*.—But this is anticipating our ensuing expositions.

"Till the thousand years should be fulfilled." The question has been often agitated among commentators whether this period was to be understood in its most literal acceptation, as designating the term of precisely one thousand solar or civil years, or whether it denoted a period of one thousand prophetic years, a lapse of time equivalent to 360,000 civil years. It has been deemed repugnant to our conceptions of the wisdom and goodness of the Most High to suppose that he would allow so much longer a term for the reign of sin on earth than for the reign of righteousness; and conceiving the Millennium to point to a period yet future, they have been anxious to find some warrant for prolonging the term to a far greater extent than is implied in its literal designation. And since a less period of time is in several instances in the Apocalypse employed as the symbol of a greater, as a 'day' for a 'year,' a 'month' or 30 days for 30 'years,' &c. so the term 'years' is here interpreted on the same principle, and evolved into the long duration mentioned above. But the idiom of symbolic

language, if we mistake not, forbids this construction, and ties down the expression to the sense of a thousand literal or civil years. In the prophetic style a 'day,' which is the complete revolution of the earth round its own axis, is the symbol for a year, which is the complete revolution of the earth in its orbit round the sun. The lesser revolution in this case is the symbol of the greater revolution of the same kind. But in those early ages of society in which the symbolical language was first adopted, the state of astronomical knowledge did not lead men to perceive any greater revolutions of the earth by which time is measured; and for which a year, as the lesser revolution, might have been the proper symbolical character. Accordingly, in fact, the original word (ἔτη), which expresses the civil year, and is the word exclusively used in this passage, does not appear to be employed as a symbol by any of the prophets, either in the Old or New Testament.* If they predicted a very long period of time, for which a year might be a more convenient symbol than a day, they always take another word than a year to signify 360 prophetic days, as many civil years. Thus Daniel, ch. 7. 25. employs the expression 'a time, times, and the dividing of time;' and John, Rev. 12. 14. 'a time, times, and half a time.'

It may be observed, moreover, that even on the ground of the common theory of the Millennium, which considers it as answering antitypically to the seventh

* The word occurring Rev. 9. 15. is not ἔτος, but ἐνιαυτον, signifying indefinitely a *revolution*, or *that which returns into itself*.

day of the Creation, it entirely destroys the analogy to assign to the seventh millennary a longer term of years than to either of the six preceding. If the six thousand years destined to elapse prior to the seventh, the great sabbatism of the world, are to be understood literally, why not the seventh thousand also? Is not the Sabbath composed of the same number of hours as the rest of the days of the week?

But our interpretation of this whole subject encounters no difficulty whatever from this source. As we consider the Millennium as long since past—taking the term of course in its literal acceptation—we know of nothing to straiten us in the assignation of the chronological futurities of the kingdom of Christ on earth. We feel ourselves at full liberty to give their utmost latitude to the expressions of the prophet;—"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, *and it shall stand for ever.*"* "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom *for ever, even for ever and ever.*"† The prosperous and glorious state which we are taught to anticipate for the church on earth is not, that we can learn, limited or defined by any boundaries of time whatever. An immeasurable lapse of ages stretches before us, offering 'ample room and verge enough' for the physical, intellectual, and moral improvement of the human race. A new and brighter career is yet to be run by

* Dan. 2. 44. † Dan. 7. 18.

the regenerated family of man; nor is the prospect, as we read the revelations of heaven, clouded by those portentous Magellanic shadows which to the mass of the Christian world gather round the closing period of their Millennium. But this is a point to be *proved*, and not barely *asserted*. The idea will be expanded in the sequel.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." We are fully aware that upon the sense ordinarily attributed to this passage will be founded the most formidable objection which can be urged against the views of the Millennium advocated in this treatise. It has been so common to regard the millennial period, announced in the Apocalypse, as but another name for every species of temporal and spiritual prosperity to be enjoyed on earth during that extended term of years, that the attempt to shake this 'throned opinion' will doubtless have very much the air, and perhaps the effect, of undertaking to controvert a self-evident proposition. If the language of the prophet—it will be said—in the vision before us, does not point to a positively and pre-eminently blissful state of the church and the world, when wars, and discord, and bloodshed shall cease, when truth shall have supplanted error, and righteousness sin, and the whole human race shall have been

moulded into one grand fraternity of love, where, in the entire compass of revelation, is the promise of any such blessedness contained? And as to the hypothesis of the Millennium being already *past*, where, in the annals of history, has any such period occurred? What are the events which, by any stretch of ingenuity, can be made to answer to the grand and glorious predictions of this chapter? When and where in the ages past have the thrones been set, and the souls of the beheaded martyrs lived and reigned with Christ in the triumphs of the first resurrection? These, we readily admit, are imposing questions, presenting difficulties in the way of our interpretation of a very plausible character. Still we do not despair of meeting them all with a satisfactory reply. But in doing so, we must discard every *arbitrary* construction, and adhere rigidly to the laws of symbolical interpretation, the neglect of which, if we mistake not, will be found to have given all its force to the objection now stated. Bringing then the common theory of the Millennium to this standard for trial, what is there, we ask, in the nature of the symbols employed, which imperatively requires us to regard them as shadowing forth a state of things peculiarly and transcendantly prosperous? We have already seen that the act of 'the binding of Satan,' as far as the interests of the church are concerned, is merely a *negative* act, denoting simply the withdrawment of his influences, exerted in a peculiar form, from the precincts of Christendom; but as to the *actual* state of the Christian world in the mean time, we derive no information from this circumstance. Whether it were in reality prosperous or

adverse we are to learn from other sources. This however is a matter on which it was obviously very important that the prophet, as the representative of the church, should be particularly instructed. While Paganism was banished from its primitive seats, and shut up among the idolatrous tribes of northern and eastern Asia, what, in the mean time, was the condition of Europe, the theatre of the fortunes of Christianity? The banishment of the Dragon had cleared the stage for the transaction of a new series of events, which were to run parallel with the term of his imprisonment, and the scope of the Holy Spirit in the passage before us is unquestionably to portray, under appropriate imagery, the most remarkable occurrences of that period. He accordingly in this verse makes a transition from the realms of Paganism to those of Christendom, and gives us the leading features of the state of the Christianized world during the thousand years that elapsed from the binding of Satan, and while the Beast held his baneful ascendancy over that portion of the globe. But the times of the Beast were pre-eminently disastrous times, and consequently we look in vain for a season of general prosperity and happiness during the true era of the Apocalyptic Millennium. We speak confidently on this point, for it follows as an irresistible conclusion from what we have already determined respecting the period of Satan's binding. So surely as we have rightly fixed the chronology of that event, so surely does it coincide with a thousand years of the reign of the Beast, and consequently *cannot* designate that halcyon Millennium which is usually anticipated. There is no possible way that we can conceive of over-

throwing this conclusion, but by first disproving our interpretation of the main symbol, the Dragon. For if the Dragon be Paganism, the binding of the Dragon is the suppression of Paganism within the limits of the Roman world, and as history makes it evident that that event has long since transpired, the prevailing expectation on that subject as of something yet future is altogether fallacious.

But what were the objects presented to the prophetic ken of the apostle in this part of the vision? They were such, indubitably, though clothed in a mystic dress, as to correspond with *the actual state of things as described by the pen of history.* Upon recurrence then to the records of the times we find, that during the greater portion of that period the several independent kingdoms, from which the modern despotic states of Europe are descended, denoted by the ten horns of the Beast, were subsisting and continually acquiring more vigor, and exercising a wider sway. We term them 'independent;' for although they submitted to the spiritual jurisdiction of the Pope, yet, politically considered, they were governed by laws and constitutions of their own framing, and were wholly independent of any foreign power. They are said indeed to have agreed to give their power and strength to the Beast; or, in other words, to have devoted their service and support to the upholding of the interests of that vast fabric of secular dominion adumbrated by the Beast, and they are elsewhere termed 'the kings (kingdoms) of the earth' over which 'the great city,' represented by the mystic Woman,

bare rule; yet they were nevertheless, as viewed in relation to each other, and to every other mere civil power, strictly independent. It is accordingly, we suppose, to these several independent sovereignties, as the most prominent objects of prophetic vision on the European platform, that the words of John distinctly refer. "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them (a Hebraism for 'they were sat upon'), and judgment was given to them (i. e. to their occupants)." The meaning we apprehend to be, that he saw thrones erected and occupied in England, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Germany, where there had been but one throne before; and those who sat upon them were, in the counsels of Providence, invested with royal authority to order at their pleasure the affairs of the nations which they governed. As this however is an interpretation of the phrase 'judgment was given to them,' upon which much depends in our general exposé of the meaning of the passage, it behoves us to endeavour to confirm it from the usage of the sacred writers. The original Heb. word מִשְׁפָּט, of which the Greek κρίμα, *judgment*, is a translation, is a derivative from the verb שָׁפַט, signifying *to judge, discern, determine, order, regulate, direct*, and is in several instances equivalent to *reigning*, or *exercising authority as a ruler and a prince*. Thus Judg. 16. 31. 'And he שָׁפַט, *judged* Israel twenty years;' i. e. governed. 1 Sam. 8. 20. 'That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king יִשְׁפְּטֵנוּ, *may judge us*;' i. e. may rule over us. As to the substantive מִשְׁפָּט, to which the Greek κρίμα or κρίσις answers, Lowth re-

marks, that 'it is taken in a great latitude of signification. It means rule, form, order, model, plan, rule of right, or of religion; an ordinance, institution; judicial process, cause, trial, sentence, condemnation, acquittal, deliverance, mercy,' &c.* Thus Ps. 72. 1. 'Give the king thy *judgments*, O God;' Gr. *τὰ κρίματα σου τῷ βασιλεῖ δὸς*, i. e. grant to the king commission to execute thy judgments, in punishing offenders, and discerning between the faithful and the false among thy people. Ps. 119. 84. 'When wilt thou execute *judgment* (Gr. *κρίσιν*) on them that persecute me?' i. e. inflict punishment. Numerous passages to the same effect might be readily adduced, from which the inference can scarcely fail to be drawn, that by judgment's being given to those that sat on the thrones, is meant, that they received authority to reign and govern, or *the right of exercising judgment*, according to the Hebrew sense of the word 'judge,' which is equivalent to that of 'reigning,' or putting forth the judicial and executive acts of the governing power. The drift of the language is to inform us, that the providence of God for wise reasons had permitted these sovereign powers to attain to a supremacy, which enabled them by their unrighteous statutes and exactions to exert an oppressive influence on the true church. In consequence, therefore, of this providential license, they passed their cruel and condemnatory sentences against the faithful followers of the Lamb, adjudging to tortures and to death those who persisted

* Lowth on Is. 42. 1.

in a steadfast witnessing to the truth as it is in Jesus, and in an unshaken refusal to worship the Beast, whose power these kings had pledged themselves to uphold, or to receive his insignia on their foreheads or in their hands.

We are aware that Mede and many other interpreters have, from the similarity of language of the two prophets, applied the vision of Daniel, ch. 7. 9–27, to this part of the Revelation. Daniel does, indeed, speak of 'thrones,' v. 9. but it is of thrones which were 'cast down,' or violently subverted. He speaks also of the 'judgment sitting,' and of 'judgment being given to the saints of the Most High,' but by this latter expression is evidently implied that judgment or sentence was given *in favour of the saints*, instead of against them, as was the case in John's vision, and undoubtedly points to a time subsequent to that spoken of in the Apocalypse, a time when the saints and martyrs should be rewarded by a 'judgment' of approbation and blessedness in view of their fidelity and constancy in suffering the effects of the 'judgments' which these despotic 'thrones' had previously inflicted upon them. The vision of Daniel, in fact, and the 'judgment' to which he alludes, has a prospective reference to the vindicatory judgment of the seventh Trumpet; Rev. 11. 18. 'And thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.' The visions of the two prophets, therefore, though couched in analogous lan-

guage, refer to entirely distinct events, and to periods of time separated by an interval of several hundred years.

But there were other objects embraced in the scenic representation made to the intellectual eye of the seer. "I saw the souls (ψυχας) of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God," &c. That is, he saw those who worshipped not the beast, and were suffering under the unrighteous edicts of these 'thrones,' the organs of papal persecution, as confessors and martyrs in defence of the pure unadulterated religion of Jesus; the Waldenses and Albigenses in France, the Lollards in Germany and England, and others in other quarters of Europe, who held to kindred views of the truth; as such there were dispersed throughout Christendom during the darkest days of the church, a holy and blessed band of recusants against the pretensions and claims of the Man of Sin, while the mighty fabric of his power was towering up towards heaven.

But can this interpretation be established from a fair and unforced exegesis of the text? Of this let the reader judge. We proceed to lay before him the evidence on which it is founded. It is all along to be borne in mind that John, in witnessing the visionary scenes described in the Revelation, is under the influence of a prophetic ecstasy, or supernatural illapse of the Holy Spirit. In this state the functions of the external senses are in abeyance, and the objects seen are exhibited exclusively to the mental perception of the beholder. The prophet's imagination is made, by the special operation of divine power, a canvass on which the various objects and agents of the vision are depicted; or rather it be-

nes, if we may so say, the screen on which the dowy forms of the mystic diorama are thrown, and de to pass in review, like the scenery produced by the of the optician. If, therefore, either living men or less corpses are introduced into the train of the onary objects, it is obvious that they would appear im as the phantasms of a dream, mere images, forms, dows, like the *umbræ* or *ghosts*, seen by Æneas in the sian fields. So Ezekiel, in the description of the on of the cherubic throne, ch. 1. 26. says; 'And n the *likeness* of the throne was the *likeness* as the *earance* of a man above upon it.' Now we think it y be shown that the most appropriate term in biblical ek for the expression of this idea is ψυχη, answering he Latin *anima*, *soul*, the word here employed. A y slight inspection of the original scriptures will ice that the sense ordinarily affixed to the English d *soul*, implying a disembodied immaterial spirit, by neans answers to the predominant import of either Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ, or the Greek ψυχη. In the usage of sacred writers its leading sense is that of *persons*. is Gen. 17. 'That *soul* (Gr. ψυχη, *person*) shall be off.' Ex. 1. 5. 'All the *souls* (Gr. id.) that came of the loins of Jacob.' Lev. 4. 2. 'If a *soul* (Gr. shall sin through ignorance.' v. 27. 'If *any one* . id.) of the common people sin through ignorance.' . 7. 20. 'But the *soul* (Gr. id.) that eateth of the i of the sacrifice.' Lev. 22. 11. 'If the priest buy *soul* (Gr. id.) with his money.' Deut. 24. 7. 'If an be found stealing *any* (Gr. id.) of his brethren.' am. 14. 14. 'Neither doth God respect any *person*.

(Gr. id.)' Ezek. 27. 13. 'They traded the *persons* (Gr. id.) of men.' Acts 2. 43. 'Fear came upon every *soul* (Gr. id.).' 2 Pet. 2. 14. 'Beguiling unstable *souls* (Gr. id.).' Rev. 18. 13. 'The merchandize of gold and silver,—and slaves and *souls* (Gr. id.) of men.' It is obvious that in all these instances the acceptation of the term has no relation to the *soul* in contradistinction from the *body*; and the biblical student who has never made the scriptural *usus loquendi* in respect to this word a matter of critical examination will be surprised, upon reference to a concordance, to find how *very few* are the cases in which it can possibly be understood as equivalent to our English term 'soul' in its metaphysical sense. Indeed he will perhaps cease to wonder that some able Christian writers have seriously doubted whether it ever really bears that sense at all, or, in other words, whether the doctrine of the intermediate separate state of human spirits can be solidly supported merely upon the scriptural usage of this and its kindred terms.* But that it cannot have this sense in the passage before us is evident from another consideration. How could the prophet see an immaterial soul? The soul is not, in its own nature, a substance capable of coming under the cognizance of the senses; and even in the shadowings of a prophetic vision, a soul, in order to be exhibited to the percipient, must assume more or less of the properties of a corporeal being. But the moment it becomes

* See this question treated fully and learnedly in Bishop Law's 'Essay concerning the use of the words Soul, or Spirit,' in the Appendix to his 'Considerations on the Theory of Religion.'

invested with the attributes of corporeity, as it must in order to be an object of visionary representation, it is at once transformed to precisely such an entity, shade, ghost, or phantasm, as we affirm to have constituted, to the prophet's mind, the visible image of a man, as composed of body and soul united. And such we contend to have been the real objects seen in the entranced perception of the prophet. He beheld the *persons* of the martyrs who were beheaded, or otherwise put to death, for the testimony of Jesus; and he beheld them in such an aspect, or under such a form, as was appropriate and congruous to the general character of the imagery which he was called to contemplate.

The term 'souls' then, employed in the language of this vision, far from denoting the immaterial part of the martyrs in distinction from their bodies, and far also from implying the revival of the spirit of the martyrs in a subsequent generation, is in fact but another name for the 'persons' of the martyrs themselves living in the times of the Beast, and signalizing their fidelity by withstanding his usurpations. Whether, however, it were the design of the Holy Spirit to intimate by the use of this term that the 'persons' spoken of *had actually been slain* at the time to which the vision refers, is a matter somewhat doubtful. That they were in a state of active existence of some kind at the time they were seen, there can be no doubt, as they are represented as reigning with Christ, but whether it were an existence enjoyed prior or subsequent to their being beheaded is not of so easy solution. We incline on the whole to the latter opinion, as in Rev. 6. 9. we find the term manifestly employed

in this sense. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the *souls* of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord," &c. Here again we are forbidden by the nature of the symbolic imagery to affix to 'souls' the sense of departed spirits. For with what propriety could a disembodied immaterial spirit be represented as 'crying with a loud voice,' or as being clothed 'with white robes'? These are circumstances which must necessarily be predicated of beings possessed of an organized corporeal existence of some kind, and doubtless the true idea intended to be conveyed by the word 'souls' in this connexion is very similar to that of the poets Homer, Virgil, and Ossian in speaking of the shades of departed heroes.* But there is a peculiar fitness from scriptural usage in employing this term in reference to those who had lost their lives by martyrdom. For we find that the sacred writers denominated the blood of any creature its *life* or *soul*. Thus Gen. 9. 4. Πλὴν κρέας ἐν αἵματι ψυχῆς οὐ φάγεσθε—*but flesh with the blood of its life shall ye not eat.* Deut. 12. 23. Ὅτι αἷμα αὐτοῦ ψυχή—*for the blood of it is the life, or soul.* Accordingly Christ is said, Is. 53. 12. to have 'poured out his *soul*' because he shed his *blood* unto death. And again in v. 10. of the same chapter, it is said, 'When thou shall make his *soul* an offering for sin;' i. e. shall make his *blood*, or his *life*, an offering. This is strikingly

* Thus Homer, in the opening of the Iliad;

Πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς αἴδι προΐαψεν

Ἡρώων.—And prematurely sent many brave *souls* to Orcus.

leled by the usage of the classic writers. Thus l has, 'Purpuream vomit ille animam'—*vomited his purple life, or soul;* and Horace, 'Non vanæ it sanguis imagini'—*the blood may not return to the ss form;* where the commentator remarks, 'Sanest vita'—*the blood is the life.* Now the *blood* or of the victims which were sacrificed under the Jewconomy was poured out upon or about the altar in a way, that it all flowed at last to the bottom, and remained. Lev. 4. 18. 'And the priest shall pour ll the blood *at the bottom of the altar* of the burnt ng, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the regation.' As martyrdom, therefore, was a kind of fice performed by the martyrs in shedding or pourut their blood, and offering their bodies to God, as ars from the language of Paul, Phil. 2. 17. 'Yea, f I be *offered upon the sacrifice* and service of your I joy and rejoice with you all;' and again, 2 Tim. 'For I am now ready to be *offered*, and the time y departure is at hand;' the *souls*, accordingly, of who had been thus slain and offered, are very apriately represented as being 'under the altar,' i. e. l about the base of the altar, where the vital blood ie victims flowed. Guided by this train of re- we shall not probably err in assigning to ψυχας, , an analogous import in the vision under considera- especially as ψυχη in several instances in the uagint version occurs in the sense of *a dead body.* s Lev. 19. 28. 'Ye shall not make any cuttings in flesh *for the dead* (Gr. επι ψυχη).' Num. 6. 11. that he sinned (contracted defilement) *by the dead*

(Gr. περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς)' i. e. by touching a dead body. Lev. 21. 1. 'Speak unto the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled *for the dead* (Gr. ἐν τοῖς ψυχαῖς) among his people.' Ezek. 44. 25. 'And they shall come at no dead person (Gr. ἐπὶ ψυχῇ) to defile themselves.'

But these souls thus *shed* or *dead*, are at the same time portrayed as actually *living* and *reigning* with Christ during the thousand years. The death therefore which they suffered could not have been such as materially to affect their existence. In some sense they still continued to live; for it does not seem possible to understand the language of any other class of men than the very identical martyrs spoken of, and who are unequivocally determined by the expressions 'for the witness of Jesus,' and 'for the word of God.' It cannot imply, therefore, the restoration to life of those who had died in former ages by the hands of Jewish or Heathen persecutors, but a class of men are designated of whom it may be said without detriment to the truth, that though they were dead, yet still they lived. This of course brings us to the necessity of a more close and accurate analysis of certain terms occurring in this connexion, the true explication of which is indispensable to a right view of the passage. Is it, then, according to the style either of Christ or the apostles, or of the Holy Spirit in any other part of the sacred volume, to speak of *life* or of *living* in a sense which the mere fact of physical death destroys not, affects not? Is there a *spiritual* in contradistinction from *animal* life, which may properly be said to survive the dissolution

of soul and body, and triumph over the potency of the grave? In attempting a reply to this question, the following passages bear too directly upon the point to be overlooked. Ps. 22. 26. 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall *live for ever.*' Upon which Ainsworth remarks,—"The *living* of the heart importeth also the *cheering, comfort,* and *solace* of the same; as in Gen. 45. 27. 'And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father *revived* (Heb. *lived*).'" In like manner, Ps. 69. 32. 'The humble shall see this and be glad: and your heart shall *live* that seek God.' Still more apposite are the following; John 11. 25. 'Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: *he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*' Luke, 20. 37, 38. 'Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. *For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.*' John, 6. 50, 51. 'This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, *and not die.* I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, *he shall live for ever.*' A similar phraseology is applied in its most emphatic sense to Christ. Rev. 1. 17, 18. 'And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, I am the first and the last; I am he *that liveth, and was dead;* and, behold, I *am alive* for evermore.' Rom. 6. 10. 'For in that he died, he died unto sin once;

but in that he *liveth*, he *liveth* unto God.' In this spiritual and eternal life of Christ, including in it the fulness of holy joy, blessedness, and peace, the true disciples of the Savior are frequently represented as participating. John 14. 19. 'Because *I live, ye shall live* also.' 2 Cor. 13. 4. 'For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but *we shall live with him* by the power of God toward you.' Again, that the word 'live' is used in a figurative sense akin to that which we attribute to it in the passage before us will appear from 1 Thess. 3. 8. 'For now we *live*, if ye stand fast in the Lord.'

Is it not possible, then, from this array of quotations, to educe the true signification of the term 'live,' as applied to the martyrs whose 'souls' the prophet beheld in vision? Is not its genuine import that of *spiritual life?* Is it not the designed implication of the Holy Spirit that in the midst of surrounding apostasy these faithful 'souls,' with unwavering persistency, stood to their testimony, and from the vigor and *vitality* of their faith, might be said in the highest and best sense *to live*, while moral corruption, open defection, and spiritual death were spreading their ravages on every side? Was not the steadfast cleaving to the truth, the resolute maintenance of the life of godliness in their souls, and the unshrinking resistance even unto blood to the claims and usurpations of an Antichristian power, a conduct fitly characterized as at once a 'living' and 'reigning' with Christ? True, they might be put to death; they might encounter persecution, torture, and martyrdom in

their most appalling forms; the fiercest malignity of the Beast and the unsparing ire of 'thrones' and potentates might wreak itself upon their heads, still they were 'more than conquerors;' the martyr's crown was the badge of their blessed kingship; and in them was illustriously fulfilled the truth of the inspired saying; "If we *suffer* we shall also *reign* with him." They *reigned* in fact *in* their sufferings.

Now when it is considered that the Holy Spirit had a *prospective* design in framing the imagery and the phraseology of this remarkable vision; that it was devised and put on record in great measure for the behoof of those who should *actually be called to suffer*, that their spirits might be armed beforehand for the terrible conflict, we can see an adequate reason for painting the scene in very vivid colors. It was fitting, in the nature of the case, that it should be so exhibited as to operate as a powerful motive in reconciling the minds of the faithful to the prospect of suffering. They would evidently need, in *looking forward* to a fiery trial of their faith, to have the circumstances of their fate and the prospect of its issues so depicted, that they could read their *reward* in close connexion with their *endurance*, and accordingly the vision is so described, is couched in such a peculiar style, as was admirably calculated to produce this effect. But is there any absolute necessity which prescribes that the same construction should be put upon the words by those who lived *before* and those who live *after* the event? Is no allowance to be made for the progress of scriptural illumination in subsequent ages? Suppose that the simple-minded martyrs of a former

day, in a period of a great moral and intellectual darkness, should have adopted a more *gross* interpretation of the mystic imagery of the Apocalypse, and should have imagined that the 'thrones,' here spoken of, were destined for them to sit and reign upon as co-assessors with Christ in a predicted millennial regency, yet who was harmed by it? In what respect did the interests of truth suffer? We are certain that their final remuneration was no *less* glorious than they were thus led to anticipate, and if their expecting it under this peculiar form tended to animate and cheer them in their excruciating sufferings, if it gave additional strength to their resolution and lustre to their patience, if, in a word, their interpretation was the best adapted of any other to their peculiar circumstances and exigencies, why should we object to the idea of their having rested upon a construction which was not perhaps intrinsically the most correct? And why should we, whose lot is cast in an age far more propitious to the explication of the mysteries of revelation, from so many of them having been accomplished, feel bound to abide by the views of a less enlightened period? May not the very same portion of holy writ afford milk to babes, and strong meat to grown men?

But in order to redeem our present interpretation from the possible charge of novelty, paradox, and extravagance, we are happy to be able to adduce the suffrage of no less a master of exegetical theology than the celebrated Witsius.

"These sentiments," says he (namely, that there will be a resurrection of all—righteous and wicked—at

one and the same time), "are clearly deducible from the constant and unvarying doctrine of the Scriptures, and from sound reason. They who think differently, however, have something to produce as the ground of their opinion. They found it in particular on Rev. 20. 4–6. where John gives an account of a certain period of the church, in which the Devil and Satan is to be bound a thousand years. 'And I saw thrones,' he adds, 'and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded,' &c.

"But even in this passage, if we only examine, we shall find that it contains no such thing as that which these men suppose they discover in it; John does not affirm that he saw the souls of them that were beheaded, much less that he saw the martyrs themselves that were beheaded, sitting upon thrones. He says only that he saw thrones, and those who sat upon them, not determining who they were: or rather making it sufficiently plain that this is not to be understood of souls. For the words employed do not admit of this interpretation. In the Greek they are καὶ κρίμα ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς. But if the reference had been to souls (τας ψυχας) αὐτῶν would have been used.—Further, he does not say, that he saw that the men who were beheaded lived *again*; far less that the bodies of the beheaded lived *again* on the earth. He asserts merely, that he saw the souls of them that were beheaded, not living *again*, but *living*; that is, filled with unceasing joy, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob *live* to God; and reigning with Christ, namely, in the kingdom of glory, where they reap the fruit of their

labours and death, whilst they behold the enlargement of the church during these thousand years.

"Besides the souls of those which had been beheaded which he saw in heaven, John saw on earth those (observe, it is not the souls of those, but the *persons themselves*) who did not worship the beast nor his image, &c. that is, those who, adhering steadfastly to Christ, determined to have no fellowship with Antichrist. These also *lived*, enjoying a blessed peace of conscience and a rich abundance of spiritual consolation—and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Not that their lives as individuals extended to a thousand years, for this never was and never will be the lot of any mortal, but men of that description reigned during many successive ages, till the appointed period. And if you strongly urge their living *again*, this may be affirmed of these also, for they lived again, inasmuch as under the tyranny of the beast that description of men had lately been harassed, oppressed, reduced to a small number, and involved in such difficulties and privations, that they scarcely lived, or discovered any principle of vitality at all; but now the face of affairs being changed, their numbers are increased, and breathing a freer air, they move all their limbs with ease and spirit."—*H. Witsii Exer. Sac.* p. 513–516. Amstel. 1697.

It will be observed, that the above extract does not present, in every point, an exact accordancy with our foregoing exposition, but the agreement in the main particulars is sufficiently marked for the purposes of illustration.—Leaving then the preceding interpretation to be

judged of by its own merit, we proceed to the consideration of the further particulars of the vision.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were fulfilled." The *'οι λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν —the rest of the dead*, here spoken of, are evidently mentioned by way of antithesis to the 'living' and 'reigning' martyrs alluded to in the preceding verse; and if we have succeeded in showing that by the one class are to be understood the *spiritually living*, it will follow that by the other are to be understood the *spiritually dead*, as otherwise the point of the opposition is altogether lost. The prophet, it will be recollected, or the Holy Spirit by the prophet, is describing a dark and disastrous period of the church, a time when the Beast was rising to the zenith of his power, and when the great mass of the nominally Christian world had acknowledged his dominion, and taken upon them his mark. This vast multitude constituted 'the rest of the dead,' an expression which Pareus affirms to be equivalent to *'οι λοιποὶ νεκροὶ—the rest, (even) the dead;* as in Rev. 9. 20. the phrase *'οι λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων—the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues*, is plainly equivalent to *'οι λοιποὶ 'οι ἀνθρωποι—the rest, (even) the men, which were not killed*, since otherwise the expression would involve a contradiction in terms, the object of the writer being to make a distinction between those who were killed and those who were not. During this calamitous era, therefore, the body of professed Christians throughout the dominions of the ten Kings who occupied the 'thrones' of the vision, was divided into two great classes, those who were *spiritu-*

ally living and those who were *spiritually dead*, the latter constituting the vast majority in point of numbers, and being elsewhere described as 'all the world that wondered after the beast,' and again alluded to Rev. 13. 8. where it is said that 'power was given him (the Beast) over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the *book of life* (the roll or catalogue of the *living*) of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' They were those in fact who constituted the members of that grand Apostasy, headed by the character so clearly predicted and so largely described by the Apostle under the denomination of 'the Man of Sin.' These then were the spiritually and mystically *dead*, 'for he that liveth in sin is *dead* while he liveth.' No ray of the light of life beamed on the darkness of their millennial night. They were in a state of moral dormancy and deliquium, from which it is the scope of this passage to assure us that they should not be awakened so as to *live* through the lapse of that protracted period. But does the language, rightly interpreted, imply that they should live *after* the expiration of that term? By no means. The drift of the Spirit of inspiration is merely to intimate that the latter class were distinguished from the former by the fact, that those who composed it did *not* live through the memorable period of the thousand years, without at all necessitating the inference that they *did* live after the period had expired. It is a well established canon of interpretation, that adverbs, denoting a termination of time, are, notwithstanding, often intended, not to intimate an actual

termination, but, on the contrary, to signify perpetuity. Thus Ps. 110. 1. 'Sit thou at my right-hand *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Is it at all implied by this that Christ should *cease* to sit at his Father's right-hand when his enemies were brought into subjection? So also Is. 22. 14. 'This iniquity shall not be purged *till* ye die.' But are we to infer that it should be purged then? Certainly not. It is equivalent to saying it should never be purged. In like manner 1 Sam. 15. 35. 'Samuel came no more *until* the day of his death;' i. e. never came any more. 2 Sam. 6. 23. 'Michal had no children *until* the day of her death;' i. e. never had any. Rom. 5. 13. 'For *until* the law, sin was in the world.' But did sin cease after the entrance of the law? Obviously the writer's aim is to state a particular fact in respect to a particular period of time, without in the least intimating that that fact ceased when the period ceased. So in the present instance. Nothing farther is intended to be affirmed respecting 'the rest of the dead' than that they did not, like those to whom they are opposed, live during the memorable Millennium. As to what happened to them *after* that period, nothing is expressly said; but in conformity to the usage just illustrated, the inference is that they *never* lived in the sense in which *living* is predicated of the 'souls' of the martyrs. We are aware, indeed, that the phrase 'lived not again' may be thought to militate with this construction; but although it cannot be doubted that our translators read in their copies ἀνεζησαν, *lived again*, yet it is remarkable that some of the most approved editions of the New Testament, as

that of Knapp for instance, reject this as a corrupt reading, and insert ἐζησαν, *lived*. There is little doubt that ἀνεζησαν has crept into the text from the construction put upon ἐζησαν in the preceding verse. As in the prevailing views of the Millennium that word was understood to signify a *literal resurrection*, or *living again*, the inference would not be unnatural that when the same thing was denied of a certain class of men, the term employed would of course be one having the same signification, only preceded by a negative. This affords a specimen of the manner in which men's preconceived hypotheses have been suffered to warp, not their interpretation only, but the very reading of the sacred text.

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." The original ἀνάστασις, *resurrection*, we apprehend to be here used as the abstract for the concrete, strictly denoting *the persons who composed the resurrection*. Thus Rom. 3. 30. 'Seeing it is one God which shall justify the *circumcision* (i. e. those who are circumcised) by faith, and the *uncircumcision* (i. e. those who are not circumcised) through faith.' So also Rom. 4. 9. 'Cometh this blessedness then upon the *circumcision* only, or upon the *uncircumcision* also?' Gal. 2. 9. 'That we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the *circumcision* (the Jews).' Phil. 3. 3. 'We are the *circumcision* (the circumcised ones).' Phil. 3. 2. 'Beware of the *concision* (the concisionists).' Rom. 11. 7. 'The *election* (the elect ones) hath ob-

tained it.' In like maner, the expression, 'This is the first resurrection,' we understand as equivalent to 'This is the first body of resurrectionists.' Not that we suppose a *literal corporeal resurrection* to be intended, for it does not appear that there is to be a first and second *literal* resurrection, but a *mystical* and *spiritual* one; a resurrection which shall answer to the explanation given above of the 'living' of the saints and martyrs of the millennial era. Repentance and abandonment of sin, conversion to truth and holiness, devout obedience to the divine commandments, a determined but humble perseverance in maintaining 'the testimony of Jesus and the word of God,' a resolute purpose to withstand at all hazards the aggressive usurpations of antichristianism, may justly be deemed a conduct worthy to be characterized as *a resurrection to spiritual life*, and therefore properly attributed to the noble band of confessors and witnesses whose bright example of courage, constancy, zeal, faith, and patience, relieved the darkness of that gloomy period. In reference, therefore, to a more general and powerful and glorious triumph of the gospel, a revivescence of righteousness still more illustrious, to be enjoyed in subsequent ages of the church, this is termed by way of distinction 'the *first* resurrection.' And of this resurrection the subjects are pronounced to be 'holy and blessed,' inasmuch as they are favoured with a happy immunity from the *peril* of being involved in 'the second death,' though they might be called to endure the pains of the first. This expression, which occurs in no other part of the Scriptures but in the Apocalypse, viz. ch. 2. 11. 'He that overcometh

shall not be hurt of *the second death*;' and, ch. 20. 14. 'And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is *the second death*,' is not perhaps susceptible of an explication so clear and satisfactory as could be desired. It is a phrase of Rabbinic rather than of scriptural origin, and is evidently used to denote some fearful kind of punishment to be inflicted upon transgressors, whose guilt was of a deep die, in some anticipated state called by them 'the world to come.' But until we are enabled to learn with more precision than has yet been practicable, the real sense affixed by Jewish writers to the phrase 'world to come,' we must remain in a great measure ignorant of the exact import of the expression 'second death.' In the mean time, the only clew which we possess to guide us to its meaning is afforded by the following passages, collected from the Chaldee Paraphrasts, Deut. 33. 6. 'Let Reuben live and not die,' Jerus. Targ. 'Vivat Reuben in seculo hoc, neque moriatur morte secunda'—*let Reuben live in this world, and let him not die the* SECOND DEATH. The Targum of Jonathan, however, has, 'Nec moriatur morte qua moriuntur improbi in futuro seculo'—*nor let him die the death which the wicked die in the world to come.*' Is. 22. 14. 'Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die,' Targ. 'Donec moriamini morte secunda'—*till ye die the* SECOND DEATH. Is. 65. 6. 'But will recompense, even recompense into their bosom.' Targ. 'Et tradam morti secundæ corpora eorum'—*and I will deliver their bodies to the* SECOND DEATH. Is. 6. 15. 'The Lord shall slay thee.' Targ. 'Interficiet vos Dominus morte secunda'—*the Lord shall slay you with the* SECOND

DEATH. Jer. 51. 39. 'That they may sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord. Targ. 'Sed moriantur morte secunda, et non vivant in seculo futuro'—*but let them die the* SECOND DEATH, *and not live in the world to come.* Ps. 49. 10. 'For he seeth that wise men die.' Targ. 'Quoniam videbit sapientes improbos, qui moriuntur morte secunda, at adjudicantur Gehennæ'—*since he shall see the wicked wise men who die the* SECOND DEATH, *and adjudged to hell.* Although, therefore, Cocceius understands by the 'second death' in this passage merely *final apostacy*, or hopeless obduration of heart;* yet it is probable that it points to the ultimate irrevocable doom of the lost after death. If so, the drift of the prophet is to convey the assurance, that the blessed participants of the first resurrection should not only enjoy all the present happiness and triumph, included in their 'living' and 'reigning' state on earth, but in addition to this, should be crowned with the prerogative of exemption from the fearful lot of those who might finally sink beyond redemption into the woes and horrors of the 'second death.'

The Holy Spirit having thus completed all that it was necessary to say respecting the state of things within the limits of Christendom during the period of Satan's restraint, having fully acquainted us with the sufferings

* Qui autem revixerunt, ii *beati* sunt, quia *justi-sancti*, quia a Spiritu Sancto sanctificati ad amorem veritatis. Propter eam causam *secunda mors*, *αφωια*, *απωτασια*, induratio, in eos potestatem non habet. Regeniti non deficerent; quia *beati* et *sancti* sunt; h. e. quia a Deo justificati sunt et arrhabonem Spiritûs a Deo acceperunt, et eo signati sunt.—*Coc. in Rev.* 21. 6.

and trials of the victims of papal persecution, another transition now occurs in the thread of the visionary narrative, and he proceeds to the memorable finale of the Dragon's machinations against the church, eventuating in his own defeat and destruction.* The consideration of this part of our subject will form the matter of the ensuing chapter.

* "Because Satan was still to play a last game before he was condemned to his final judgment, by which he shall be quite driven from having any thing to do with mankind; the Holy Ghost goes on now to show us how he comes to his end in seeking, when loosed out of prison, to regain his dominion over men by assaulting even Christ and his saints, all over his kingdom; even to the very attacking of the *blessed* and *holy* city. The *prison* therefore is the *abyss* wherein he was chained. We have no hints at all to make us determine what, and where, this prison shall be; whether Satan indeed shall, during the Millennium be quite without visible votaries, or whether he shall have some such, but in so low a condition, and so much penned up, that he shall be as in a prison among them, without capacity to make excursions to disturb the peace of the world. If this last be true, *it is likely that it will be among some of those nations which are called Gog and Magog in the next verse, and which he will then seduce to disturb Christ's kingdom.*"—*Daubus Perpet. Comment.* p. 943.

CHAPTER V.

EXPLICATION OF THE GOG AND MAGOG OF THE APOCALYPSE.

Various Opinions of Commentators respecting Gog and Magog—Reason of this Diversity—The mention of this mystic Power by John extremely brief and obscure, because more fully predicted by Ezekiel—The Identity of the Gog and Magog described by the two Prophets maintained—An extended Exposition of Ezek. Ch. xxxviii.—Gog and Magog shown to be a prophetical denomination of the Turks—Consequently the same Power with the Euphratèan horsemen of the sixth Trumpet, and to be referred to the same Period—As certain, therefore, that the Millennium is past, as that the events of the sixth Trumpet have transpired—Destruction of Gog and Magog by Fire from Heaven explained—Objections answered.

"AND when a thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." No part of the Revelation has given rise to a greater diversity of opinion, or to wilder or more extravagant conjectures, than this announcement of the future appearance and exploits, defeat and destruction, of the mystic Gog and Magog. On the one hand, the tremendous power shadowed forth by this denomination has been summoned

up from the then barbarous and pagan hemisphere of America and the Terra Australis Incognita. On the other, they have been generated, like the classical Python, by the productive heat of the sun, from the teeming slime of the renovated earth. And again, the bars of the grave have been burst in quest of them, and they have been resolved into countless armies of the risen dead, to whom a resurrection to life has been but a resurrection to their former fiendish malignity against the people of the saints, by which they are now urged on to a new assault against the holy and happy portion of the universe. Mede, Burnet, and Gill, are the distinguished names by which these strange hypotheses are severally endorsed, and their credit has given them currency, to a greater or less extent, among others of inferior note. Another class of writers, giving a purely mystical import to the appellation, suppose it to be intended merely as a figurative term denoting the enemies of the church in general, whether Pagan, Mohammedan, or pseudo-Christian.*

As, however, the views of expositors respecting the

* The objection to this mode of interpretation is well stated by Calovius :—"Sed nimis manifestum est, describi certum regnum, ac certos populos, quorum nomina, provincias, et situm expressit Spiritus Sanctus, neque in tam operosa populorum a nominibus gentilibus, et patronymicis descriptione, illa omnia allegorice exponi possunt, nisi vim textui insignem facere velimus"—'*But it is too obvious, that a particular kingdom is described, and certain people, whose name, provinces, and situation are expressly designated by the Holy Spirit; nor in such a labored description of people by their gentile and patronymic denomination can all these things be understood* ALLEGORICALLY *unless we would do positive violence to the text.*'—*Calovius in loc.*

Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse have been governed entirely by their theories of the Millennium, it is not surprising that they should have broached the most fanciful constructions of the sacred text. For as long as they regarded the Millennium itself as yet future, they were obliged of course to consider the entrance of these hostile powers upon the prophetic arena at the end of the thousand years, as also future. They would as soon have sought for the living among the dead, as to have recurred to history for the identification of those mystic personages. But as the future is the field of conjecture, imagination has been suffered to run riot in the attempt to conjure up from among the shadows of coming ages the mysterious characters here described. That we look upon all such anticipations as groundless and chimerical, the reader will have inferred from the foregoing train of remark. Regarding the Millennium as long since past, we of course recur for the fulfilment of the prediction concerning Gog and Magog to the pages of history, instead of the auguries of prophecy; and as the establishment of our main theory respecting the chronology of the Millennium affords a strong *prima facie* evidence that the event in question has at least entered upon a course of accomplishment, so the positive proof of the latter position will be found to reflect back a powerful confirmation of the former.

And here it may be remarked in the outset, that it can scarcely have escaped the notice of the reader of the Apocalypse, that the mention of this hostile power, whatever it may be, is extremely brief and obscure, and accompanied with no clew which might serve to aid the

enquirer in his attempts to identify it. In other parts of the book involving mysterious revelations, hints and intimations are thrown out formally or incidentally with the express design of enabling us to apply the symbolical shadows to their appropriate substances. But nothing of the kind occurs in regard to Gog and Magog. They are, like Melchizedek in the history of Moses, suddenly introduced upon the stage, and after acting a part of great moment, as suddenly dismissed, and nothing more is heard of them. But what is the inference to be drawn from this feature of the prophetic narrative? Does it not indicate unequivocally that the Spirit of inspiration *presumes* upon a certain amount of information in the reader's mind derived or derivable from other portions of the sacred volume? As the whole system of inspired prophecy, both in the Old Testament and the New, is intimately connected together, the visions of John being in most cases merely an expansion of the more dense and involved revelations of Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Daniel, so where any particular series of events is more fully developed by one prophet, we should of course expect it to be more succinctly given by another. Here then, we are persuaded, we have the true grounds of the brevity of the Holy Spirit in the passage before us satisfactorily laid open. For it so happens that in the book of Ezekiel, ch. 38 and 39, we have a strikingly parallel prophecy detailing at great length and with the utmost minuteness every particular respecting the Apocalyptic Gog and Magog which can be necessary for a complete explication of this part of the vision. The two prophets unquestionably allude to precisely the same

power, the same period, and the same events, and the reader will probably be surprised at the extent to which the one is capable of being made to illustrate the other.*

The necessity, therefore, is forced upon us of entering into a minute consideration of the Old Testament prophecy in order to do full justice to our exposition of the language of John. Still we do not hesitate to assure the reader that he will experience no diminution of interest in passing from the one to the other. We are still engaged in the pleasing task of exploring the 'chambers of imagery' in the august temple of prophecy, all of them replete with treasures of more value than the catacombs of Egypt.

EZEKIEL, CH. XXXVIII—XXXIX.

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 2. Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, 3. And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: 4. And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and

* "Convenit autem hæc Ezechielis prophetia cum illa, quæ est Apoc. 20. 8, seqq. ceu ex collatione cuivis patebit. Neque enim per nudam allusionem ibi allegatur hæc predictio sed indicatur a Sp. S. eam nunc fine seculi implendam"—*But this prophecy of Ezekiel coincides with that of Rev.* 20. 8, *etc. as will be apparent to any one on inspection. Nor is this prediction there adverted to merely by way of allusion, but the design of the Holy Spirit is to intimate that it now, towards the end of the world, receives its accomplishment.—Calovius ad Ezech.* cap. 38. 2.

will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.

Ch. XXXIX. 1. Therefore thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; 2. And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: 3. And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. 4. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. 6. And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord. 7. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

The remark has been made by former commentators that the concluding chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse of John bear a striking resemblance

to each other. A resurrection is mentioned by each—the invasion, with its disastrous consequences, of Gog and Magog, is predicted by each—and in each we meet with the description of a remarkable city, with its various appurtenances. The grand burden of the two oracles in their closing parts is obviously the same, so that the citation of the one is absolutely indispensable to the correct exposition of the other. But although the kindred character of these predictions has been long since noted, we are not aware that the attempt has ever been made to identify them in the manner or to the extent which we now propose to do.

The scope of the prophecy contained in the chapters quoted above has been variously understood by commentators. By some it is regarded as the prediction of a formidable invasion against the land of Israel subsequent to their return from the Babylonish captivity, and Gog is considered but another name for Antiochus Epiphanes, and Magog the mystic denomination of the mingled barbarian hordes which fought under his banner. But the history of the Jewish nation discloses no events in any period of its annals which answer to the lofty figurative representations here given,* and the mass of commentators at the present day seem inclined to rest in the conclusion briefly stated by the judicious Editor of the Comprehensive Bible:—"Though it is not generally agreed

* "Interpretes tamen sanioris judicii libenter concedunt, integrum complementum in historia nondum demonstrari posse, sed in futurum tempus esse conjiciendum"—*Interpreters of sound judgment freely admit, that the entire fulfilment cannot as yet be demonstrated from history, but is to be referred to the future.—Michaelis.*

what people or transactions are here predicted, yet it seems evident that the prophecy is not yet accomplished. Nothing occurred in the wars of Cambyses or Antiochus Epiphanes with the Jews that answers to it; and the expression here used—'in the latter days'—plainly implies that there should be a succession of many ages between the publication of the prediction and its accomplishment. It is therefore supposed, with much probability, that its fulfilment will be posterior to the conversion of the Jews and their restoration to their own land, and that the Turks, Tartars, or Scythians, from the northern parts of Asia, perhaps uniting with the inhabitants of some more southern regions, will make war upon the Jews, and be cut off in the manner here predicted."* It will doubtless be admitted, then, that this prediction of Ezekiel did not receive its fulfilment prior to the Christian era, and if we seek for it subsequent to that date, we presume it will not be referred to an earlier period than that of the Turkish invasion of the eastern provinces of the Roman empire between A. D. 1000 and A. D. 1452, when the city of Constantinople yielded to the Moslem arms. It is to this period, in fact, in our opinion, that the prophecy is to be referred. We have no doubt that the hostile power adumbrated by Gog and Magog, is identically the same with the Euphratean horsemen of the sixth trumpet, universally allowed to symbolize the rise and progress of the Ottoman empire, and of this, if we mistake not, the evidence will accumulate with every step of our ensuing exposition.

* Greenfield's Notes in loc.

, "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him," &c. The names occurring in the commencement of this prophecy refer us directly to the tenth chapter of Genesis, where Moses has given a detailed account of the peopling of the earth by the several sons of Noah and their descendants. "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and unto them were sons born after the flood. The sons of Japheth, *Gomer*, and *Magog*, and Madai, and Javan, and *Tubal*, and *Meshech*, and Teras. And the sons of Gomer, Ashkenah, and Riphath, and *Togarmah*." Now from the fact of these names being retained by Ezekiel so long after their original possessors had ceased to exist, it is evident that they are to be considered as the names of *nations*, and not of *persons*. Indeed there are few idioms more frequent in the Scriptures than that by which a people, even to the latest generation, are called by the name of their primitive founder. Thus the nation of the Jews is, in innumerable instances, called Israel, from Israel or Jacob, the father of their tribes; the Edomites are repeatedly called Edom, after the name given to Esau, their founder; in like manner, Moab and Ammon are national denominations flowing from the names of their respective founders. So also in the passage of the prophet before us, Gog and Magog, as well as Meshech and Tubal, are doubtless to be construed as the distinctive appellations of certain people inhabiting those tracts and territories of the globe which originally fell to the lot of the individuals whose names they bore. 'Gog,' indeed, in strict

propriety, appears to be used as a personification of the general power which held dominion over those regions, just as we say of 'the Turk,' in modern times, that he holds possession of some of the fairest portions of the earth, though the Turkish empire includes in reality a great number of different nations. The expression, therefore, 'against Gog, the land of Magog,' is equivalent to, 'against Gog, living in, or ruling over, the land of Magog.' In consistency with this figurative phraseology the same allegorical personage is called the '*prince* of Meshech and Tubal.' Now it is universally conceded that 'Magog' is but another name for the populous hordes of the north of Asia inhabiting the ancient Scythia. "Nothing," says Vitringa, "is more certain and indubitable than that by 'Gog and Magog,' in Ezekiel, are denoted the posterity of Japheth, or those northern nations which peopled the country lying between the Euxine and Caspian seas, and the region still farther north, extending from the Tanais on the west to the Mount Imaus on the east."* Rosenmuller also observes, that "after what Bochart and Michaelis have written on the subject, it is no longer susceptible of doubt, that by 'Magog' here is intended the Scythia of the orientals."† In Gen. 10. 2. Magog is placed between Gomer and Madai, that is, the Cimmerians and the Medes, to the north of each of whom were the Scythians. In fact there were no nations known to the Hebrews situated farther to the north than those which are here associated with Gog; and in answer to the

* Vitring. in Apoc. p. 871.

† Rosenmul. Comment. in Ezek. ch. 38. 2.

question whether the Magog of the Scriptures is to be taken in the same latitude with the Scythia of the Greeks and Latins, or whether the title is to be restricted to some particular region of Scythia with its inhabitants, Michaelis holds decidedly to the former. 'Neither the geographical allusions,' says he, 'of Moses or Ezekiel, or the knowledge of the Hebrew race, extended beyond Magog, and the prophet here assigns to the power predicted, too immense an army to consist with a territory of moderate dimensions.' As therefore the remote regions of the north and the north-east were so little known to the inhabitants of central Asia, there is every probability that those numerous tribes of barbarians, comprised by the ancients under the general name of Scythians, and by the moderns under that of Tartars, are here included in the denomination of *Magog*. Jerome expressly affirms, 'that the Jews of his age understood by Magog the vast and innumerable nations of Scythia, about Mount Caucasus, and the Palus Mæotis, and stretching on from thence along the Caspian towards India.' This is confirmed by the language of Josephus, who says, 'that Magog founded those nations which from him were named Magogitis, but which by the Greeks are called Scythians.'* The Syriac and

* "Now this Gog, who brings with him the confederacy of all the nations, is not by us to be mistaken, who can add to the light of ancient geography which our fathers have left us, the observation of God's providence, which is showing forth Gog's great ascendant power in the sight of the whole world. The land of Magog is generally, and indeed beyond doubt, fixed to be the land beyond Mount Caucasus; all which, without exception, is now possessed by the Emperor of the North.

Arabic writers, in like manner, frequently introduce the names of Gog and Magog as a familiar designation of the Tartar nations bordering upon India, and the Mohammedan tradition respecting the appearance of Gog and Magog among the precursors of the resurrection is very remarkable. Among the portentous signs of that grand event, Sale enumerates 'the eruption of Gog and Magog, or as they are called in the east, Yâjûj and Mâjûj; of whom many things are related in the Koran, and the traditions of Mohammed. These barbarians, they tell us, having passed the lake of Tiberias, which the vanguard of their vast army will drink dry, will come to Jerusalem and greatly distress Jesus and his companions; till at his request God will destroy them,

And from Gog, it is believed by the learned, that the very name of Caucasus (*Gogasus*), as also the name of Georgia, or Gordia, in that district, is derived. Also from Magog they reckon that the Mæotic lake, or Sea of Asoph, hath its name. Gog is called the prince of Ross, Meshech, and Tubal. The Muscovites are believed, by common consent, to be the people of Meshech, and with them the people of Tubal are constantly joined. They are thought to have settled at the heads of the Euphrates and Tigris, between the Euxine and the Caspian seas; and from thence to have sent up colonies to people the north; of which it is believed that the Tobolski are one. Now the river Araxes, which runs through that region, was anciently, and is still by the Arabians, called Ross: so that Ross, Meshech, and Tubal, which compose the princedom of Gog, doth take in the region from the mouth of the Volga to the mouth of the Don; from which region there can be no doubt that the people called the Rossi or Russians, the Mosci or Muscovites, and the Tobolski, have proceeded, and all these northern countries have been peopled."—*Irving's Discourses on Daniel's Vision of the four Beasts*, p. 476.

and fill the earth with their carcasses, which after some time God will send birds to carry away, at the prayers of Jesus and his followers. Their bows, arrows, and quivers the Moslems will burn for seven years together; and at last God will send a rain to cleanse the earth, and make it fertile.'* This tradition is evidently a distorted reflection of the scriptural prophecy, like many other things contained in the Koran, which appear, compared with the truth, like an object seen at the bottom of a river or lake when the surface is roughened by the wind.† Again, it is remarked by Bochart that the land of Gog and Magog is the region about Mount Caucasus, which the neighbouring Colchi and Armenians in their semi-Chaldaic dialect termed גוג חסן, *Gog-hasan*, i. e. *fortress of Gog*, which the Greeks softened to Καυκασον, *Caucasus*, in the same manner as they changed the Heb. גמל, *gamal*, *camel*, into καμηλος, *camelus*. The name is also detected in 'Gogarene,' a part of Iberia, mentioned by Strabo; and Wells maintains that the Mæotic Lake took its name from the descendants of Magog settled about it; for from Magog is regularly formed *Magogitis*, or *Magotis*, which last the Greeks might easily mould into *Maiotis*, rendered by the Latins *Mæotis*.‡

* Sale's Koran, *Prelim. Dis.* p. 111.

† "The legend of the Koran teaches moreover that Gog and Magog were to be restrained within the limits of their appropriate region, by an immense wall of iron and brass, till the expiration of a certain predicted period, when the wall was to be reduced to dust, and they were again to go forth as a desolating scourge upon the earth."—*Sale's Koran*, vol. ii. p. 140. Lond. 1825.

‡ "What particular nations these shall be is not fully agreed

Now it is unquestionable that there is no point in respect to the origin of nations more certain than that the Turks are the descendants of the ancient Scythians. "In the midst of these obscure calamities," says Gibbon, "Europe felt the shock of a revolution, which first revealed to the world the name and nation of the TURKS. Like Romulus, the founder of that martial people was suckled by a she-wolf, who afterward made him the father of a numerous progeny; and the representation of that animal in the banners of the Turks preserved the memory, or rather suggested the idea, of a fable, which was invented, without any mutual intercourse, by the shepherds of Latium and those of *Scythia*. The sides of the hills were productive of minerals, and the iron forges, for the purposes of war, were exercised by the Turks, the most despised portion of the great Khan of *Geougen* (query—a derivative from *Gog ?*)."*

by learned men, who have turned their attention to this subject. But the best founded opinion is, that the Scythians are descended from Magog. It is also said, that the Mogul Tartars, a people of the Scythian race, are still called *Magog* by the Arabian writers, who, beyond the writers of every other country, have preserved ancient names and customs. That they shall be a northern nation Ezekiel plainly declares in ch. 28. 15. 'And thou shalt come from thy place out of the *north* parts, thou and many people with thee.' This he predicts of Gog *in the latter days*. Hence it is highly probable that Gog and Magog signify the Mogul Tartars, and certain that they signify these nations, be they who they will, who shall in fact be the lineal descendants of Magog, Tubal, Meshech, and Togarmah, at the end of the Millennium."—*Johnston on Rev.* vol. ii. p. 356.

* Decline and Fall, p. 717.

Their first appearance, however, upon the European stage, was at a period too early to answer to the fulfilment of this prophecy; but their incursions were checked, and in the language of symbols they were bound in, or rather *at* or *about*, the river Euphrates, till released by the blast of the sixth trumpet, when they were again let loose, and poured themselves down upon the Apocalyptic 'earth.' It was this second irruption of the northern nations (called by Dan. 11. 40. 'the king of the north'), in reference to which Gibbon remarks, that "*When the black swarm first hung over Europe, they were mistaken* (rather, rightly taken) *by fear and superstition for the Gog and Magog of the Scriptures, the signs and forerunners of the end of the world.*"* Our main position, therefore, viz. that the Turks and Tartars of modern times, inhabiting the very countries of the Gog and Magog, and genealogically descended from them, are prophetically pointed at in the scope of this oracle, may be considered as fully established. We proceed then in our explication, the progress of which will throw still clearer light upon the position above mentioned.

"The chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." The original, נְשִׂיא רֹאשׁ מֶשֶׁךְ וְתוּבָל, Gr. ἀρχοντὰ Ρὼς, Μοσὸχ, καὶ Θὸβελ, may be rendered as it is by Bochart and others—*prince of Ross, Meshech, and Tubal*, as the Heb. term רֹאשׁ, *Rosh*, for *head* or *chief*, is supposed by many to be a proper name, the genuine radix of *Russia*, as *Meshech*, Gr. *Mosoch*, betrays its affinity with *Muscovy*. "The learned Bochart," says Wells,† "has

* Decl. and Fall, p. 1021. † Sac. Geog. p. 23. 4to ed.

observed from the Nubian geographer, that the river in Armenia called by the Greeks Araxes, is by the Arabians called *Rosh;* and he not only probably infers, that the people that lived in the country about that river, were denominated *Rosh;* but also proves from Josephus Ben Gorion, that there was a people in these parts named *Rhossi.* Now the Moschi and Rhossi being thus neighbours in Asia, their colonies kept together in Europe: those of the Moschi in the province of Muscovy, i. e. about Moscow; those of the Rhossi in the parts adjoining on the south. On the whole, therefore, it may be very properly believed, that the Muscovites and Russians in Europe were colonies of Meshech, or of Meshech and Tubal jointly." We are still, therefore, conversant with the northern nations of the eastern continent, the very nations whose descendants afterward fell under the dominion of the Turks, and have remained so to the present day.

"And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen," &c. The original for 'I will turn thee back' is considered by Grotius, following some of the ancient versions, as equivalent to the Greek περιστρέφω, and the Latin *circumagam, I will turn thee hither and thither;* implying that his movements should be so entirely under providential control, that while aiming to accomplish his own infatuated counsels, he should be led, drawn, or driven, as a horse is reined and guided at the will of his rider, or as the fish, which has taken the hook into its mouth, is drawn in the water one way or the other according to the pleasure of the

angler.* As it is the prerogative of the Most High to make the wrath of man to praise him, while the remainder of wrath he restrains, so in the present instance he announces his intention of so overruling the mad and headstrong projects of the invaders, that in their wildest career they should still be bringing to pass the secret purposes of the infinite mind. The present rendering, 'turn thee back,' is evidently incorrect, as it is said immediately after, 'I will bring thee forth.' With what conceivable propriety could he be said to be 'turned back' before he had 'gone forth?' The true import is doubtless that which we have given above—'In bringing thee forth I will lead and turn thee this way and that, as it seemeth good unto me.'

A striking note of identification is afforded us in the allusion to the horses and horsemen, which were to constitute the strength of this tremendous armament. It brings the prediction into direct parallelism with that of John in the Revelation, in announcing under the sixth trumpet the fearful expedition of the Euphratèan horsemen, or the myriads of the Turkish cavalry. Rev. 9. 16. 'And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.' The historian of the Decline and Fall, who seems, in the construction of his great work, to have been 'led by the nose' very much in the manner of the people whose annals he relates, thus yields his constrained attestation to the truth of the inspired word. "As the subject *nations* marched under the

* "Rather, 'I will mislead thee;' or, more paraphrastically, 'I will infatuate thy counsels.'"—*Horsley.*

standard of the Turks, *their cavalry, with men and horses*, were proudly computed by *millions*."* "The sultan had inquired what supply of men he could furnish for military service. 'If you send,' replied Ishmael, 'one of these arrows into our camp, fifty thousand of your servants *will mount on horseback*.' 'And if that number,' continued Mehmud, 'should not be sufficient, send this arrow to the horde of Bulik, and you will find fifty thousand more. 'But,' said Gaznevide, dissembling his anxiety, 'if I should stand in need of the whole force of your kindred tribes?' 'Despatch my bow,' was the last reply of Ishmael, 'and as it is circulated around, the summons will be obeyed by *two hundred thousand horse*.' "† "The Roman emperors were suddenly assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians, who united the Scythian valour with the fanaticism of new proselytes, and the art and riches of a powerful monarchy. *The myriads of Turkish horse* overspread a frontier of six hundred miles from Tauris to Arzeroum; and the blood of one hundred and thirty thousand Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet."‡ The Prophet Daniel, in a parallel prediction, Dan. 11. 40, thus announces the desolating irruption of the Turkish power; "And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, *with chariots, and with horsemen*, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, and shall overflow, and shall pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land (the land of Palestine), and many countries shall be overthrown." The Turkish forces were in fact com-

* Decl. and Fall, p. 717. † Ib. 1055. ‡ Ib. 1058.

posed of a vast colluvies of barbarous nations, which, disdaining infantry as unsuited to the rapidity of their movements, poured themselves down in immense bodies of cavalry from the mountains and fastnesses of the north, sweeping like a torrent, a tempest, or a whirlwind over the Asiatic provinces of Rome.

"Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarter," &c. This is a farther specification of the various tribes and people who were to range themselves under the Turkish banner, forming a constituent part of the grand confederacy of Gog and Magog. We here see them flocking from the north, the east, and the south, thus fulfilling the terms of the Apocalyptic prediction, that after the expiration of the thousand years, 'the nations which were in *the four quarters of the earth*' should be gathered together in that fatal enterprise.

"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company," &c. We have before remarked that the prophecy of Ezekiel now under consideration contemplates precisely the same series of events with that of the sixth trumpet of the Apocalypse, and that both refer to the period and the power of the post-millennial Gog and Magog. We have therefore a triple announcement of the same momentous issue by which a particular period of the world was to be distinguished; and if to these we add certain predictions in Daniel touching upon the same occurrences, it may be said that they are set forth in a fourfold diversity of representation.

Now it is worthy of especial note, that in the vision of the sixth trumpet, when the four Euphratèan angels, that is, the four Turkish sultanies, were to be loosed from their previous restraint, it is said, Rev. 9. 15. that 'the four angels were loosed, which were *prepared* (ἑτοιμασμένοι) for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,' by which we are inclined to believe is simply intended, that they should all of them be *ready* precisely at one and the same time, even on the very same year, month, day, and hour, to perform their appointed work. The accumulation of these four terms seems designed merely to make the language more emphatical, and to represent it as a wonderful occurrence, that these different principalities should be *prepared* in the providence of God, simultaneously to break the bonds by which they had hitherto been impeded, and to do it also at that precise point of time which had been predetermined in the divine counsels. We conceive, therefore, that the expression 'prepared' carries in it a direct allusion to the same phraseology in the Old Testament prophet; 'Be thou *prepared* (ἑτοιμάσθητι);' i. e. be thou ready at the appointed time. It is in this sense of *being ready* that the original term occurs in the following passages: Ex. 19. 11. 15. 'And *be ready* (ἑτοιμοι) against the third day." Josh. 8. 4. 'Go not very far from the city, but *be ye all ready* (ἔστεσθε πάντες ἕτοιμοι).' And so elsewhere. The import, then, of the words may be supposed to be, that whatever might be the purposes or attempts of these northern invaders, their menacing might was to be held in abeyance up to the completion of a certain definite period, when the providential

restraints which had hitherto curbed their operations should be removed, and that then, being fully *ready*, every barrier should be burst, and nothing farther should oppose them in the accomplishment at once of their own designs and those of heaven. Accordingly, as if to explain this intimation, it is immediately added:—

"After many days thou shalt be visited; in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, &c. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land," &c. This must certainly be considered as throwing forward the date of the fulfilment of this prophecy to a period very far removed from the age of the prophet by whom the oracle was uttered. The phrase —'in the latter years,' literally, 'in the posteriority of years'—when occurring in the Old Testament, almost invariably refers to the period of the Gospel dispensation, and generally to the concluding part of that period, so that it is evident we are to look for the completion of the prophecy to a date considerably subsequent to the Christian era. The inspired assurance is, that after this long tract of time has been passed over, Gog and Magog shall, in some sense, 'be visited.' The question is, in what sense? The term taken by itself is ambiguous; for in the scripture idiom God is said to 'visit' both when he executes his purposes of judgment and of mercy. Thus it is said of the fulfilment of the promise made to Sarah respecting the birth of a son, Gen. 21. 1. that 'the Lord *visited* Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.' On the other hand, in speaking of the punishment of Korah,

Dathan, and Abiram, it is said, Num. 16. 29. 'If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be *visited* after the *visitation* of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me.' So also Is. 26. 14. 'Therefore hast thou *visited* and *destroyed* them, and made all their memory to perish.' In the present instance, however, this latter acceptation of the term seems less pertinent, as the object in these verses is mainly to describe the warlike apparatus and the annihilating purpose of Gog, while the intimation of his punishment is deferred to the 18th verse; 'And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face.' A more appropriate signification then must be sought for the word in this connexion. By recurrence to scriptural usage we find a number of instances where the Hebrew פָּקַד, *to visit*, is used in the sense of *appointing as an overseer*, *giving in charge*, *entrusting with a commission*, and in the passive, of being thus appointed, designated, or empowered. Thus Gen. 34. 4. 'And he *made him* (Joseph) *overseer* over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.' Here the original is literally 'he made him to visit.' So Num. 3. 10. 'And thou shalt *appoint* Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priests' office.' 2 Chron. 36. 23. 'Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me, and *he hath charged* me to build him an house in Jerusalem.' Job 34. 13. 'Who hath *given him a charge* over the earth?' Job 36. 23. 'Who hath *enjoined* him his way?' Neh. 7. 1. 'And when the porters, and the singers, and

the Levites *were appointed*' (Heb. 'were visited'). Neh. 12. 44. 'And at that time were some *appointed* (Heb. 'visited') over the chambers for the treasures,' &c.

Guided by this clew we apprehend the genuine import of the term before us to be, that 'after many days,' or when the destined era had elapsed, Gog and Magog should, in the deep counsels of heaven, be *appointed, commissioned, and receive it in charge*, to execute, as the organs of the divine will, a great and momentous work; and this work the prophet immediately goes on to describe. The degenerate nations of Christendom had, by their sins, rendered themselves obnoxious to the judgments of God, and these rude but powerful tribes were to be the instruments by which they should be inflicted. They are accordingly apostrophized to this effect, as were Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus when employed for a similar purpose. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath *will I give him a charge*, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, &c. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." In either case the agents employed were intent upon the accomplishment of private ends of their own, and never dreamt that they were bringing to pass the pre-determined and pre-announced counsels of Him who sways the hearts of kings and the movements of armies at his pleasure. This view of the passage is confirmed by the renderings of some of the ancient ver-

sions. The Chal. Targum has it; 'After many days thou shalt *prepare thy forces*;' and the Syriac, 'Thou shalt *receive charge*, or commandment.' The Septuagint employs ἑτοιμασθήσῃ, *thou shalt be in readiness*; i. e. in readiness to act in subserviency to the will of the Most High.

In this connexion we cannot but advert to a remarkable but obscure passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, of which we imagine the true key is to be found in the burden of Ezekiel now under consideration, and in the parallel prediction of the Apocalypse. Is. 24. 21, 22. 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.' We regard these two verses as an epitome of the twelfth and twentieth chapters of the Revelation; the first containing the war in heaven and the overthrow of the Dragon and his angels; and the second, the binding of Satan as a prisoner in the pit of the abyss, and his release in the person of Gog and Magog at the close of the thousand years. It would subject us to too wide a digression to enter fully into the consideration of the time, occasion, scope, connexion, &c. of the prediction of which these verses form a part, but that the language quoted is singularly german to that of Ezekiel in the chapter under review, is obvious to every eye; and it has never, moreover, been appropriated by commentators in such a way as to for-

bid our present application of it.* In each of the prophets the power predicted is represented as held for a certain time in some kind of durance or restraint, and in each it is said that this power 'after many days shall be visited'—visited, that is, in the sense of having obstructions removed, and of being designated to the performance of certain signal exploits, the pre-ordainment of Heaven. Thus we perceive how the rays of scriptural light converge from every quarter to illustrate the history of the symbolical Dragon in his doings and his destiny. Considered as the prompting genius of the Pagan dominion, he is first struck down from the allegorical heavens ('the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high'), and then immured in the

* Aben-Ezra upon this passage remarks;—"Omnes interpretes consentiunt, ex pericopa hujus capitis id quod in loco hoc (sc. v. 14 et seqq.) dicitur, intelligendum esse de bello Gogi et Magog gitempore futuro."—*All the interpreters agree that that which is said from this section of the chapter* (v. 14.) *and onward, is to be understood of the war of Gog and Magog in some future time.*

Vitringa also, in the introduction to his Commentary on the 24th ch. of Isaiah, thus expresses his conviction of the identity of scope between this and the prophecy of Ezekiel;—"Nec alio tendit prophetia Ezechielis de Gogo et Magogo, in ipsa terra Canaanæ tandem prosternendis; quæ prophetia censeri debet huic nostræ esse parallela; unde παραλληλια φρασεως Is. 24. 22. *Post plures dies visitabuntur* cum Ezech. 38. 8. ubi eadem phrasis."—*Nor does the prophecy of Ezekiel, respecting the future destruction of Gog and Magog in the land of Canaan look any other way; which prophecy ought to be considered parallel to this of ours; whence the parallelism of phrase in* Is. 24. 22. '*After many days thou shalt be visited*,' *and* Ezek. 38. 8. *where the same expression occurs.*

prison-house of the mystic abyss ('as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison') for the space of a thousand years, when the word of prophecy proclaims the opening again of his prison-doors, and the divine 'visitation,' for wise and holy ends, sends him once more abroad in pernicious freedom to wreak his ire upon the nations.

But who are to be more especially the victims of his machinations on this his second sally into the territories of which he had been dispossessed? 'Thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel which have been always (i. e. a long time) waste.' Upon these words a commentator remarks, that by 'the mountains of Israel' is to be understood the *dwelling places of the church*, and by the 'Israelites,' *Christians*.* It is unquestionable that the subjects of the Gospel dispensation are usually spoken of by the Old Testament prophets under the denomination of 'Israel;' for as the Apostle assures us, 'he is not a Jew (Israelite) which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.' Christians, therefore, constitute the spiritual Israel,† and a predicted hostile aggression against the church, against a people professing Christianity, would naturally be couched in

* Per *montes Israel* hospitia ecclesiæ; per *Israelitas* Christian intelliguntur.—*Michaelis*.

† 'And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and *upon the Israel of God*.' Gal. 6. 16.

language like that before us. As we have seen, however, that 'mountains,' in the idiom of the prophets, is a term denoting governments, kingdoms, or principalities, the phrase 'mountains of Israel' more strictly implies the states, peoples, or bodies politic inhabiting the regions of Christendom. These Christian nations, therefore, spread over the territories of the church, were to be the objects of this formidable northern invasion. But it is said to be a land 'brought back from the sword, and gathered out of many people;' that is, rescued, redeemed, delivered from actual or threatened subjugation. This we suppose to have been effected by the Crusades, by which the first torrent of this Turkish invasion was checked and turned back. "No sooner," says a late writer, "had the Turks entered the Holy Land, and taken possession of Jerusalem, than Europe was in motion and in arms; and nations marched to the field of the world's debate. Crusade followed after crusade. Europeans became the assailants; and instead of extending their territories, the Turks could not retain the conquests they had won. On the subdivision of their empire into four sultanies, their victorious career was not long unchallenged, but speedily retarded and restrained. The Lesser Asia and Syria again became fields of battle, but with foreign foes. From these countries, formerly overflowed by them, the Turks were repelled. The Crusaders from the west and the Fatimites on the south won back the countries which the Turks had conquered (*a land brought back from the sword*), and the original region of their conquest on the banks and borders of the Euphrates became the disputed

seats of their dominion, and was partly reft from them by the Franks.—The Turks for a long period were thus restrained and *bound*. Though they came like a whirlwind so soon as their time of preparation began, yet their triumph was broken; the first of their dynasties was dissolved—they seemed to be fitted for slaughter, rather than prepared to slay.—The Crusaders from the farthest west, with incredible loss of treasure and of blood, forced back the Turks to the regions where their conquests began: and the Moguls from the farthest east took up the task of repressing them."* The identity of this terrific expedition with that of the Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse is still farther confirmed by the parallel phraseology in which both of them are announced. Thus in the one it is said, 'Thou shalt *ascend* (αναβησῃ), and come like a storm,' &c. and in the other, 'And they *went up* (ανεβησαν) on the breadth of the earth (land), and compassed the camp of the saints about,' &c. The word ανεβησαν, *ascended*, is peculiar to military expeditions, from the fact that as citadels, towns, and fortresses are usually situated upon mountains and high places, they could only be attacked by the besiegers first *ascending* to or towards them. Thus we find the word employed 1 Kings 20. 1. 'And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together, and he *went up* (ανεβησεν) and besieged Samaria.' Judg. 1. 1. 'The children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall *go up* (αναβησεται) for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?' 2 Kings 18. 25. 'Am I now

* Keith's Signs of the Times, vol. i. p. 307. 309.

come up (*ανεβημεν*) without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, *Go up* (*αναβηθι*) against this land and destroy it.' So in numerous other instances. Indeed, in the most classic authors of Greece, the proper rendering of *Αναβασις* is *expedition*, and no scholar is ignorant of the fact, that this is the very title which Xenophon has given to the expedition of the younger Cyrus against his brother.* We are led, therefore, to the conclusion, that the predicted assault of Gog and Magog, whether by Ezekiel or by John, was to be strictly a *military invasion*, and consequently that the power thus denominated was to be a *political*, and not a *spiritual* power, as some have maintained.—Passing over several intermediate verses we come to the following:—

V. 17. "Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them?" The language here is very remarkable. It may be said to afford a striking instance of the sovereignty of the

* The same remark applies to the original word *εκύκλωσαν*, rendered 'compassed about.' This also is a military phrase occurring in relation to warlike invasions, as may be seen in the following passages; Luke 21. 20. 'And when ye shall see Jerusalem *compassed* (*κυκλουμενην*) with armies.' Heb. 11. 39. 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were *compassed about* (*κυκλωθεντα*) seven days.' Thus also Eccl. 9. 14. 'And there came a great king against it, and *besieged it* (*κυκλωσε αυτην*).' Is. 29. 3. 'And I will *camp* against thee *round about* (*κυκλωσω*), and will lay siege against thee.'

spirit of prophecy. By a bold and beautiful stroke of the license of inspiration, the entire lapse of the intervening centuries between the utterance of the prediction and the period of its accomplishment, is represented as having been passed over, and the Most High is introduced just at the crisis of the fulfilment, while the hostile legions are mustering their dread array, while the blast of the martial trumpet is congregating the countless hosts from the four corners of the earth; and is made to apostrophise and interrogate them in the manner here described. As though the divine mind itself were impressed with a momentary emotion of wonder at the perfect accomplishment of his own prediction, he asks, as the darkening cloud of nations moves onward, whether indeed he now beheld the very power advancing to the very work, which he had ages before, by his prophets Ezekiel, and Daniel, and others, so clearly and unequivocally foretold? The highest flight of the genius of classic poesy may be challenged to exhibit a strain of grandeur and sublimity like this. But mere rhetorical effect is never the ultimate scope of the spirit of inspiration. Its revelations are made to minister to the understanding rather than to the taste, though the word of truth may occasionally flash forth a demonstration that it is rich even where it is confessedly poor. This striking apostrophe to Gog and Magog is but as the questioning of the criminal before his doom is pronounced. The verses immediately ensuing are big with the burden of destiny. "I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains (chris-

tian kingdoms), saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother." But in order to display more clearly the remarkable accordance between the main features of the two prophecies, we shall present them, side by side, in a tabelated view, to the eye of the reader.

Rev. ch. xx.	Ezek. ch. xxxviii. ix.
	Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog.
	I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen,—even a great company with bucklers, all of them handling swords:
And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.	Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya, with them:—Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands; and many people with thee.
And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.	After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land.
	Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.
	And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them sitting upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:
And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:	And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land that the people may know me, when I shall be satisfied in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles; and they shall know that I am the Lord.

And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

These shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.

The doom of the invading power is expressed in strong and highly wrought, but figurative language, implying that divine judgments should be superadded to human reverses in effecting its utter overthrow. The devouring 'fire,' mentioned by the latter prophet, which was to 'come down from God out of heaven,' and do the work of his wrath, is but another name for the diversified judgments of blood, pestilence, hail, fire, and brimstone, described by Ezekiel. Where the one writer is full, the other is brief; according to the uniform analogy of the scriptures. That the prediction should be in a great measure *literally* fulfilled, we have no hesitation in admitting; but that 'fire' is the symbolic term for divine inflictions in general is clear from the usage of the prophets and psalmists in instances innumerable: thus, Ps. 50. 3. 'Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a *fire* shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him,' i. e. he shall manifest his presence by tremendous judgments. To the same effect, Ps. 97. 3. 'A *fire* goeth before him and burneth up his

enemies round about.' Ps. 78. 21. 'Therefore the Lord heard this and was wroth: so a *fire* was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel.' Is. 9. 19. 'Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts the land is darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the *fire*; no man shall spare his brother.' Here the 'fire' was the destruction of every one by the hand of his brother. Is. 66. 15. 'For behold, the Lord will come with *fire*, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of *fire*.' Ezek. 21. 31, 32. 'And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the *fire* of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, and skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be fuel for the *fire*.' Lam. 4. 11. 'The Lord hath kindled a *fire* in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.' Hos. 8. 14. 'For Israel hath forgotten his Maker and buildeth temples; but I will send a *fire* upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.' The prevailing import of the term 'fire' in all these instances is that of calamities and judgments inflicted providentially by the avenging hand of God. And such we doubt not is its genuine sense in the passage before us. The burden of the oracle is, that Gog and Magog, notwithstanding the strength and terror of their forces, their high purpose of conquest and spoil, and their unwavering confidence of success, should be confronted, discomfited, and destroyed by the direct visitation of the Almighty arm.

But here it is to be remarked, that there is no necessity of understanding the language as implying a *sudden* destruction. "They compassed the camp of the

saints about and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." The import of this declaration is, that the besieging power should be *gradually wasted away* in the progress of time by a succession of calamitous events, so marked in their character, and so desolating in their effects, as to refer themselves unequivocally to their true source in the judicial counsels of Heaven. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The elements were to be commissioned as the ministers of wrath to execute the penal will of Jehovah. Plagues and pestilences were to poison the atmosphere, ponderous hailstones were to be engendered in the regions of the clouds, ruinous conflagrations were to turn villages and cities to ashes, and scenes of civil discord and blood were to complete the work of extirpation. But in the nature of things, without the intervention of a continuous series of miracles, such a result could not be brought about in a day or a year. Sufficient time must be allowed for the operation of those second causes which were to be enlisted in its production. By the very structure of the prophetic style, future events, which are gradual and successive in their occurrence, must be represented by symbols derived from objects that are visible at one view, or embraced in a single glance of the eye, so that the accident of time is always to be a matter of mental allowance on the part of the reader. What particular period of time, or whether any definite portion at all, is to enter into the account, is to be determined by other circumstances. But nothing is more certain than that a train of events covering an extended tract of ages is

often represented by a set of symbolical actions which may occupy in visionary display but the space of an instant. As in an historical painting, though a scene may be portrayed, the incidents of which, in actual occurrence, were separated by some little intervals of time, yet from the nature of pictorial representation, they are exhibited simultaneously, being all concentrated into one single moment of time, or a crisis which has no respect to duration. The necessary attribute of time has to be supplied by the mind of the spectator. So in a prophetical vision. Pharaoh, for instance, beheld in his dream the seven fat kine emerging from the river, and then the seven lean kine by whom the former were devoured, and all this within the brief space of time in which the literal action might be supposed to have been accomplished, and yet we learn from Joseph's interpretation that the period actually denoted by the imagery was a period of no less than fourteen years. In like manner, when it is said in a former vision of the Apocalypse, that 'to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness,' an event is denoted which occupied a great many years in the accomplishment. So again, Rev. 17. 16. 'And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.' By this is implied a gradual impoverishment, wasting, and destruction. The power symbolized by the profligate woman was in process of time to become an object of detestation to its former adherents and auxiliaries, its treasures and resources despoiled, and every species of indignity

and contempt, violence and aggression, to be exercised towards it. But the lapse of several centuries might scarcely suffice for the complete fulfilment of the prediction. It is in fact the announcement of a mighty moral revolution, involving an entire change of public opinion, and a consequent reverse of conduct, in reference to a certain system of ecclesiastical despotism which had maintained a pernicious ascendancy over the minds of men for a long course of ages. Like all other revolutions, therefore, originating in *principle*, it would require time, and a long time, to bring it about.

But to return to the vision of John. We have stated that the Old and New Testament prophecies under consideration are not only similar, but identical, in their scope; that the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel is the Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse; that the denomination, whether occurring in the one or the other, points to no other than the Turkish power, that colossal scourge of Christendom, which, though fast waning to its close, is not yet destroyed; from which it follows, by necessary consequence, that the threatened destruction of this formidable host by fire from heaven is but the intimation of the doom of the Moslem dominion; a doom to be executed not by a sudden blow, but by a gradual process, like the drying up of the mystical Euphrates, a symbol denoting in less forcible terms precisely the same result with that shadowed forth by the fiery destruction of Gog and Magog. As the Turkish invasion is denoted by the loosing of the four angels that were bound in the river Euphrates, so the gradual weakening, wasting, and

final extinction of that despotism is represented by the drying up of the same river.

To what an extent this prediction respecting the gradual demolition of the Turkish power has hitherto received an accomplishment accordant with the explanation now given of its terms, will appear from the following remarks of an enlightened traveller, made in 1821. "The circumstance," says the Rev. Mr. Walsh, chaplain to the British ambassador at Constantinople, "*most striking* to a traveller passing through Turkey, is its *depopulation*. Ruins where villages had been built, and fallows where land had been cultivated, are frequently seen with no living thing near them. This effect is not so visible in larger towns, though the cause is known to operate there in a still greater degree. Within the last twenty years, Constantinople has lost more than half its population. *Two conflagrations* happened while I was in Constantinople, and destroyed fifteen thousand houses. The Russian and Greek wars were a *constant drain* on the janisaries of the capital; the silent operation of the *plague* is continually active, though not always alarming;—it will be no exaggeration to say, that within the period mentioned, from three to four hundred thousand persons have been prematurely swept away in one city in Europe by causes which were not operating in any other—*conflagration*, *pestilence*, and *civil commotion*. The Turks, though naturally of a robust and vigorous constitution, addict themselves to such habits as are very unfavourable to population—the births do little more than exceed the ordinary deaths, and cannot supply the waste of casualties. The surrounding country

is therefore constantly drained to supply this waste in the capital, which nevertheless exhibits districts *nearly depopulated.* If we suppose these causes operate more or less in every part of the Turkish empire, it will not be too much to say, that there is *more* of human life *wasted*, and less supplied, than in any other country. We see every day life going out in the fairest portion of Europe; and the *human race threatened with extinction* in a soil and climate capable of supporting the most abundant population."*

* Walsh's Narrative, pp. 22-24.

The following is extracted from the London *Record* newspaper of Nov. 14, 1831:—

"*Constantinople*, Oct. 10.—On the 5th inst. a natural phenomenon, such as few persons remember, and the effects of which have been most destructive, filled with terror the inhabitants of this country; who are at the same time suffering under all kinds of evils. After an uncommonly sultry night, threatening clouds arose, about six in the morning, in the horizon to the south-west, and a noise between thunder and tempest, and yet not to be compared with either, increased every moment; and the inhabitants of the capital, roused from their sleep, awaited with anxious expectation the issue of this threatening phenomenon. Their uncertainty was not of long duration: *lumps of ice*, as large as a man's foot, falling, first singly and then like a thick shower of stones, which destroyed every thing that they came in contact with. The oldest persons do not remember *ever to have seen such hailstones.* Some were picked up, half an hour afterwards, which weighed *above a pound.* This dreadful storm passed over Constantinople, and along the Bosphorus, over Therapis, Bujukden, and Belgrade: and the fairest, nay, the only hope of this beautiful and fertile tract, the vintage, just commenced, was destroyed in a day. Animals of all kinds, and even some persons, are said to have

This general explanation will afford an adequate key to all the minor particulars of the emblematic scenery. They are said to have 'compassed the camp of the saints about and the beloved city.' The parallel expression in Ezekiel is, 'And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land.' The phraseology of the one prophet is a clew to that of the other. The 'camp of the saints' beleaguered by the multitudinous armies of Gog and Magog is equivalent to the 'people of Israel' surrounded by the myriads of horsemen in the former prophet. But we have already seen that 'Israel' is the prophetic designation of *Christians*. The land of Israel is the territories of Christendom. And the body of Christian nations against whom the Turkish tribes were to array themselves are probably described as an 'encampment' in reference to the military attitude which in self-defence they have

been killed; an incalculable number are wounded; and the damage done to the houses is incalculable. Besides that, scarcely a window has escaped in all the country. The force of the fallen *masses of ice* was so great, that they broke to atoms all the tiles on the roofs, and scattered, like musket balls, planks half an inch thick. Since that day, the rain has not ceased to pour down in torrents, and, from the slight way in which the houses are built, almost wholly consisting of windows, and with very flat roofs, that have nothing to keep off wet besides tiles, innumerable families are not much more comfortable than a bivouac. If, in addition to this, we consider that, in consequence of Pera, and the *great fires* of Constantinople itself, many have no shelter whatever; and recollect, besides, the *plague* which continues to spread, and the cases of *cholera*, which still occur; the whole together makes a most gloomy picture."

been for ages compelled to assume and maintain. The appellation 'saints,' ἅγιοι, is bestowed on the ground not so much of *personal* as of *relative* character, pointing to a body of men professing the true religion, and thus contradistinguished from the mass of the infidel followers of the False Prophet. The 'beloved city,' if not equivalent to, and exegetical of the foregoing phrase, 'camp of the saints,' may be supposed to refer to some pre-eminently favored, chosen, and precious region comprised within those limits which were environed or overrun by the desolating squadrons of the northern Gog. If so, to what memorable spot does the finger of inspiration more probably point than to the land of Palestine, and the city of Jerusalem, of which the Psalmist says, Ps. 87. 2. 'The Lord *loveth* the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.' "But the most interesting conquest," says the historian, "of the Seljukian Turks, was that of Jerusalem, which soon became the theatre of nations."* In the parallel prophecy of Daniel, ch. 11. 41. it is said, 'He shall enter also into the *glorious land*, and many countries shall be overthrown.' Again, v. 45. 'And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the *glorious holy mountain*;' unequivocal allusions to the land of Palestine. To say, therefore, that the 'beloved city,' the 'beauty of all lands,' 'the joy of the whole earth,' has been for ages in the condition here described, in a state of perpetual siege, hemmed in and ruled over by the ruthless Turk, is but affirming the most obvious fact of history, and reciting the accomplishment of the

* Decline and Fall, p. 1064.

Savior's own words, Luke 21. 24. that 'Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.'

Such then is the substance of our exposition of the Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse. We regard the terms as simply the prophetical designation of the Turkish power, constituting the woe of the sixth trumpet, the period of which coincides with the closing epoch of the Millennium. And we have endeavoured to show that the unquestionable facts of history go to confirm, in a striking manner, the truth of this position. We have also adduced evidence to prove that the Spirit of inspiration, speaking through Ezekiel, predicted, more than a thousand years before, the rise, irruption, and overthrow of the same invading power. And we now observe that it is in this latter fact that we find a clew to the phraseology of John, Rev. 20. 3. 'And after that he *must* (δεῖ) be loosed a little season.' The *necessity* here predicated of the temporary enlargement of Satan is founded upon the circumstance that such an event is plainly foretold in the Old Testament oracles. The punctual fulfilment of these ancient predictions *required* that precisely such an event should take place. This interpretation is supported by the following instances of a parallel diction in the Evangelists and Apostles. Mat. 24. 6. 'And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled: for all these things *must* (δεῖ) come to pass, but the end is not yet.' They must come to pass because they were predicted. Mat. 26. 54. 'But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it *must* (δεῖ) be.' Mark 8. 31. 'And he began to teach

them, that the Son of man *must* (δεῖ) suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders,' &c. i. e. in order to the verifying of the predictions of Moses and the prophets. Luke 23. 37. 'For I say unto you that this that is written *must* (δεῖ) yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors;' i. e. it must be accomplished *because* it was written. John 20. 9. 'For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he *must* (δεῖ) rise again from the dead.' Acts 17. 2. 3. 'And reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ *must needs* (ἔδει) have suffered, and risen again from the dead.' Luke 24. 46. 'And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved* (ἔδει) Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.' Accordingly it will be found to hold good as a general remark, that wherever the New Testament writers speak of any event as *necessary* to be accomplished, this necessity is based not upon the *secret*, but upon the *revealed* will of the Most High, as disclosed by his ancient servants the prophets. On the ground therefore of long previous annunciation, it was *necessary* that Satan should be 'loosed out of his prison, and should go out to *deceive* the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.'

But here it may be asked, how the expression 'deceive' (πλανῆσαι), if it bear the sense already ascribed to it of *seducing by means of religious imposture*, can properly be applied to these heathen nations, seeing that they were already *deceived* from the very fact of their being under the jurisdiction of the Dragon prior to their issuing forth upon this fatal expedition? We an-

swer, that the *specific end* of his 'deception' on this occasion is expressly defined by the words of the prophet. Ἐξελεύσεται πλανῆσαι—συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς πόλεμον— *He shall go forth to deceive them—to gather them together to battle.* This then was the drift of his deluding subtleties, to infatuate their minds with the project of a grand and glorious conquest to be achieved over Christendom, in consequence of which they should muster an immense armament, and go forth buoyant with hope, and blustering with bravado, to the momentous conflict. "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw the sword, my hand shall destroy them." This was the precise nature of the 'deception' to be practised upon the belligerent legions of Gog and Magog. They were to be urged on by the delusive prospect of success in their undertaking, while ultimate, remediless ruin awaited them. The term 'deceive,' therefore, in this connexion must, by the *exigentia loci*, be interpreted in a sense somewhat different from that assigned to it above.

The only point which now remains to be considered is that of dates; and this is a point requiring a very close examination. If the Dragon were not to be released from his confinement in the mystic abyss till the full expiration of the thousand years, and if this thousand years be dated from the reign of Theodosius or shortly after, that is, from some point between A. D. 395 and A. D. 450, it may be objected, that this determination of periods will by no means tally with the grand epochs of the Turkish history. For nothing is more certain

than that their first inroads upon the territories of Christendom were at least two or three centuries prior to the date to which this calculation would assign them. "The lords of a great part of Asia, which lies between the Indus and the Bosphorus, proceeded originally from the nation which dwells in the Khozzer or Khozzez plains, at the north-east of the Caspian sea. They were called *Turks* or *Turkmans:* and their first important emigration took place in the tenth century. These Tartars, like most others of their nation in their emigrations to the south, embraced the Mohammedan religion."* This expedition was headed by Seljuk, grandfather of Togrol-Bec, who between the years 1038 and 1063 defeated the Gaznevides, subjugated Persia, and was solemnly recognised by the Caliph of Bagdad as the master of all the Mohammedan states, and as the vicegerent of the Moslem world. His nephew Alp Arslan succeeded him in the year 1063: and at the close of a prosperous reign, "the fairest parts of Asia were subject to his laws, twelve hundred kings or chiefs stood before his throne, and two hundred thousand soldiers marched under his banners." He was succeeded by his son Malek-Shah, who reigned from 1072 to the year 1092, and who was the greatest prince of his age. "Persia was his; the emirs of Syria paid their submission of tribute and respect; and daily prayers were offered for his health in Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Bagdad, Rhei, Ispahan, Samarcand, Bokhara, and Kashgar. But the greatness and unity of the Turkish empire expired in the person of Malek-Shah. On his death in

* Mills' Hist. of Mohamm. p. 233.

the year 1092, the vast fabric fell to the ground; and, after a series of civil wars, *four dynasties*, contemporary and not successive, were formed: namely, that of *Persia* at large; that of *Kerman*, a province of Persia; that of a large portion of *Syria*, including Aleppo and Damascus; and that of *Rhoum*, or Asia Minor."

In the year 1240, the Ottoman Turks, who dwelt originally at the north of the Caspian sea on the plains of Kipjack or Cumania, made their appearance in Armenia, Syria, and Asia Minor. "Some of them engaged in the service of Aladdin, the Seljuk sultan of Iconium or Rhoum: and it was not beneath the dignity of their leader Ortugrul to become the subject and soldier of that prince. The Seljuks of Iconium and the Koraszmian Tartars became one people: in history they were known by the common name of *Ottoman Turks:* and the sword and sceptre of power were transferred from the sluggard Seljukian princes to their ambitious and enterprising generals."*

The narrative thus briefly recited stands almost self-applied to the events announced under the sixth trumpet, which, according to our interpretation, brings the Gog and Magog power upon the prophetic platform. The four angels described as bound in the regions bordering on the river Euphrates, are the four contemporary sultanies, or dynasties, into which the empire of the Seljukian Turks was divided towards the close of the eleventh century: *Persia*, *Kerman*, *Syria*, and *Rhoum*. "These were long restrained from extending their conquests beyond what may be geographically termed *the*

* Mills' Hist. of Mohamm. p. 133-261.

Euphratèan regions, partly by the quadruple division of their once united empire, partly by the revolutions of Asia, and partly by the instrumentality of the Crusades. But towards the close of the thirteenth century, the four angels on the river Euphrates were forthwith loosed in the persons of their existing representatives, the united Ottoman and Seljukian Turks."*

Now as the thousand years of the Apocalypse were not completed at the close of the thirteenth century, the question arises, With what propriety, consistently with the sacred text, can Satan, in the person of the Ottoman or Seljukian Turks, be said to have been loosed at that time? This question deserves a well-considered reply. In offering a solution of the problem, let us weigh the genuine import of the original:—Καὶ ὅταν τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη. Of these words the common translation is, '*And when the thousand years are expired;*' understanding the term of years to be fully completed. But a more correct rendering we apprehend to be, '*And when the thousand years are expiring, or drawing towards a close.*' The grammatical structure of the passage does not, as we conceive, imperiously require us to understand the period as having fully elapsed. The subjunctive mode in Greek having no future tense, but being obliged for that purpose to employ the *aorists*, or *indefinite tenses*, is often used in connexion with the adverb ὅταν, to denote *time current* instead of *time complete*. The following cases of a strictly parallel phraseology will redeem our proposed version from the charge of being arbitrarily adopted, merely to serve a turn. A re-

* Faber' Sac. Calend. of Proph. vol. ii. p. 415.

markably apposite instance is afforded in a former part of the Revelation, ch. 11. 7., where the war or prolonged hostility of the Beast against the Witnesses is mentioned. 'And when they shall have finished their testimony (Gr. ὅταν τελέσωσι τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν), the Beast, that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and overcome them.' Grotius, Mede, Whiston, More, Daubuz, Lowman, and Newton unanimously agree that the true rendering in this place is, *When they shall be finishing, or about to finish, their testimony.* The reason of it is plain; for the Beast was not to defer his persecution till *after* they had completed their testimony, but was to make war against them *during the time* that they were actually engaged in it. The sense therefore is plainly, *While they shall be finishing, or executing their testimony.** Again, Mat. 5. 11. 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you,' &c. (Gr. ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσι); i. e. not when men *shall have* reviled and persecuted

* Daubuz, after rendering the original,—'*And whilst they shall perform their testimony,*'—remarks: "This is the right meaning of these words, as Grotius, More, and others, even Mede himself, own. For the word τελέω may signify the doing any thing in order to its perfection, as well as the actual finishing of it. So ἐπιτελέω, in Heb. 9. 6., signifies simply to *accomplish*, without any respect to the end, any more than to the whole service: and the particle ὅ-αν, *whilst*, suits exactly with this sense, Matt. 5. 11; 10. 19. Now the sense of the whole requires it absolutely; for the power of the Beast is to make war against them during all the time of their testimony, and that power in Ch. 13. 5., is said to be 42 months, which are equal to the 1260 days of these witnesses' prophesying. Therefore the Beast makes war upon them all the time *whilst they perform their testimony.*"—*Daubuz Perpet. Comment.* p. 514.

you, but even *while* they are doing it. Mat. 10. 19. 'But when they deliver you up (Gr. ὅταν παραδιδῶσιν ὑμᾶς) take no thought,' &c.; i. e. when they *are delivering* you up. So also 1 Thess. 5. 3. 'For when they shall say (ὅταν γὰρ λέγωσιν), peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them;' i. e. while they shall be saying. Instances of the same usage might be accumulated in great abundance, from profane as well as sacred writers, but the cases adduced will be sufficient, if we mistake not, to sustain our construction of the passage.

We rest therefore in the conclusion that the Holy Spirit intended by the phraseology of the text to signify no more than that while the thousand years 'were finishing,' or verging to their termination, Satan, in the person of the pagan hordes of the north, should be released from that providential restraint to which he had been so long subjected, and should renew his machinations and cruelties against the christianized portions of the globe. It might, perhaps, be one, two, or three centuries before the complete consummation of the millennial period that he began to set his projects on foot. But in so large and far-reaching a prophecy as that before us, these minor fractions of time are not regarded by the spirit of inspiration. The predominant scope of the oracle is merely to announce in general terms the future irruption and hostile assault of the Turkish power, followed by its final discomfiture and destruction. The minute specification of dates, therefore, is not a matter of prime importance in the unravelling of the mysteries of the vision. It may be supposed that the Turkish power, although it commenced its career, and made its

incipient conquests one or two centuries prior to the full expiration of the Millennium, yet it attained its acme about the time of its close, and this construction will perhaps answer all the demands of the text. The capture of Constantinople, A. D. 1453, levelled the last bulwark that protected the Greek empire from the arms of the Ottomans, and the probable epoch of the expiration of the thousand years of the Apocalypse, was signalized by the effectual establishment of these descendants of the ancient Gog and Magog, in the once flourishing provinces of Europe and the church.*

From that time forward the spirit of prophecy has seen fit to give no other particular intimations of the fate and fortunes of the Turkish power than what is contained in the brief but pregnant declaration, that "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them," denoting, as we have already hinted, the gradual wasting away, in consequence of a series of judicial visitations of heaven, of that once formidable dominion, reared by the prowess of the scimitar, and cemented and upheld by the delusions of the Koran. The same result is shadowed out with equal significancy by the symbol of the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates under the effusion of the sixth vial, indicating the decay and exhausture of the resources, strength, population,

* While Constantinople was besieged by the Turks, some of the priests, on being reproached for their compliances with some of the superstitions of the Latin church, replied:—"Have patience, till God shall have delivered the city *from the great dragon* who seeks to devour us. You shall then perceive whether we are truly reconciled with the Azymites."—*Gibbon's Decl. and Fall*, p. 1229.

and territory of the empire of the Moslems. The process in our own day is still going on with signal and uninterrupted rapidity. Scarcely an arrival from an European port but brings the intelligence of another and a farther stage in her irretrievably downward career. Whether it be by the ravages of the cholera or the plague, of fire or tornadoes, of foreign invasion or internal revolt, the work of ruin is still advancing. Hosts of evil angels seem leagued together for its overthrow. Every succeeding report is a report of disasters, proclaiming the waning glories of the Crescent, and tolling afresh the knell of the dynasty of the Ottomans. "The spider has wove his web in the imperial palace, and the owl hath sung her watch-song in the towers of Afrasiab."

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

Correct Views of the Millennium attainable only from a right Interpretation of the Prophetic Symbols—Whatever Difficulties attend the Theory broached in the present Treatise, the common Doctrine embarrassed by equal or greater—Some of them stated—Hints respecting the predicted Conflagration of the Heavens and the Earth—True Character of the Prophetic Intimations of the future Prospects of the Church and the World.

THE foregoing pages have been devoted to the statement and confirmation of that view of the Apocalyptic Millennium which, and which only, we deem to be supported by a fair and unforced exegesis of the sacred text. This view, we are well aware, is widely at variance with the prevailing sentiments of the Christian world in relation to the grand period thus denominated. We have arrayed ourselves in opposition to the popular theory, which regards the Millennium as yet future, and in so doing are conscious of having incurred all that responsibility, not to say odium, which attaches to the attempt to assail and undermine a long-established and seldom-questioned opinion. But that we have not enlisted unadvisedly in the defence of the position which the reader will find advocated, however feebly, in the preceding chapters, we trust will be evident from the careful, candid, and plausible, if not conclusive, train

of investigation into which we have entered. It is hoped that the show of sound reasoning, sustained by philological and historical induction, will redeem the theory from the charge of wild extravagance, though it should fail to win an unwavering assent.

Of one thing, at least, we may venture to assure ourselves without hesitation; that is, that the genuine doctrine of the Millennium, if *we* have not succeeded in establishing it, must be determined, whenever it shall be done, by a method similar to that adopted in the present work. The import of the prophetic symbols must be definitively settled before a single step can be taken towards a satisfactory solution of the great problem. The notion of a future era of blessedness appointed in the benignity of the Divine counsels to dawn upon our world in the latter ages of its duration, is indeed one peculiarly congenial to the human mind, and in support of which many plausible reasons may be adduced from the general hints and intimations dispersed through the oracles of the prophets. And we doubt not that such an expectation receives the decided countenance of an enlightened reason, apart from the express assurances of Scripture. But as to the anticipation of a period so strictly defined and so characteristically marked as the Millennium of the Apocalypse, an intelligent anticipation needs to be based upon grounds less vague and equivocal. The precise meaning of the inspired annunciations must be understood. Faith, hope, and charity may combine to excite the sanguine expectation of a blissful state of the world, and an ardent fancy may be invoked to throw the hues of the

primitive paradise over the scene; when at the same time, if brought to the test of rigid exegesis, it may be nothing more than a brilliant illusion, destined to be ruthlessly dispelled by the onward course of time and Providence.

The present belongs to man, the future to God. As coming events are in themselves utterly veiled from human foresight, the prospects of the church and the world are matters of pure revelation. They can enter no farther into the scope of our limited vision than as the curtain of concealment is lifted from before them by the hand of inspiration. Now, although the predictions of holy writ are designed to acquaint us in great measure with the arcana of futurity, yet these predictions are delivered in a style dark and enigmatical, without the proper key to which they still remain enveloped in impenetrable obscurity. The language of symbols is the vehicle of prophecy. If we would explore the labyrinth, we must guide our footsteps by the only clew which will conduct us through its recesses. As it respects, then, the popular doctrine of a future Millennium, if we would not embrace a shadow for a substance, the very first question to be resolved is, What is the genuine import of the figurative and symbolical terms in which this period is announced, and by which it is described? Nothing that can properly be called *knowledge* is attainable on the subject without settling this matter in the outset. It is accordingly in this department of our inquiry that we have laid out 'the beginning of our strength;' and unless the truth and justice of our symbolical interpretations be first disproved,

we have little fear that our main position can be overthrown. Here then we intrench ourselves; behind this munition we take refuge from the missiles of prejudice, and the shafts of imputed heresy.

Now if it may be fairly assumed that we have, in our foregoing discussions, established the grand position, *that the Millennium, strictly so called, is past*, we beg leave to request, that no inferential or hypothetical difficulties arising from the apprehended relation of this to other doctrines of the Scriptures may be allowed to invalidate or vacate the above conclusion. It may perhaps be said that, as the resurrection of the dead, the day of judgment, the second coming of Christ, and the end of the world, are, at least, in the prevailing consent of Christians, intimately associated with the close of the Millennium, if that period be already past, inextricable confusion rests upon all the cognate doctrines now mentioned. The mass of the Christian world is, on this supposition, utterly thrown out of its reckonings, and is reduced to the condition of a vessel in mid-ocean which has lost its charts, journals, and instruments, and which a clouded sky in addition prevents from taking any kind of celestial observation. Its course and bearings, therefore, its distances and dangers, are all matters of vague conjecture and fearful anxiety.

In answer to this, we have only to say, that we cannot see the justice of being held responsible for consequences having relation to other truths, provided our main point, the proof of which is conducted independently of all correlate tenets, is solidly and conclusively made out. It must be obvious to the reader that we

have proposed to ourselves a single object of inquiry and proof, viz. that the Millennium of John is past. This position we have treated as capable of being established upon independent grounds, by a train of argument having no respect to any kindred dogmas whatever. If we have succeeded in our attempt, if the demonstration be in itself sound, the conclusion must stand, however it may be impugned on the ground of being at variance with other commonly-received articles of faith. For any such discrepancy the conclusion cannot be deemed responsible, nor does it fairly devolve upon us to show how the result we have reached is to be harmonized with those points of revelation with which it is supposed to be in conflict. Leaving this task, therefore, to those who think it needful to be accomplished, we challenge a rigid scrutiny to our grand position, and to the chain of proofs upon which it rests. Let it stand or fall upon its own merits. And let him who shall take up the gage, be reminded, that if he denies the signification which we have assigned to the prophetic symbols, it devolves upon him to state the reasons of his dissent, and to show *what they do mean*.

But on the score of difficulties, whatever may be urged against the dominant theory of the present treatise, it may be suggested, that the common hypothesis of the Millennium is by no means exempt from them. It is not a very unusual occurrence, when any new view of a theological or scriptural subject is broached, to array against it a host of objections, and to insist upon the formidable difficulties with which it is encumbered, as if the old view were free from all exceptions, and

stood forth in self-evident truth, while in fact it was the difficulties attendant upon the popular belief which gave rise to the innovation. Thus a warm advocate for slavery is fully alive to the difficulties and dangers of any new scheme of emancipation, and is fertile of arguments against them, while he entirely loses sight of the perils growing out of the continuance of the evil. It is certain that there are points in the popular theory of the Millennium which do not readily accord with the descriptions of the same period as contained in other portions of the Scriptures. According to the prevalent opinion, the duration of what is termed 'the latter day glory' is to be limited to a definite term of years, at the expiration of which a general and stupendous apostasy is to ensue, to be arrested only by the sudden appearance of the Son of God throned in the clouds of heaven, and coming to judge the quick and the dead. Upon this supposition, a dark and portentous cloud, visible from the commencement of the contemplated period, will approach nearer and nearer, and gathering blackness in its progress, will eventually surround the camp of the saints. Not an eye but must behold the innumerable forces of an unknown enemy, rising up as from a temporary slumber, like giants refreshed, marshalling their appalling array, and falling into their countless ranks. Now we cannot but regard this construction as at variance with the general drift of the predictions announcing the final prosperity and glory of the Redeemer's kingdom. Turning to the sublime strains of Isaiah, while his closing chapters abound with the most cheering intimations of a state of

unprecedented blessedness, to be enjoyed by earth's later generations, we find no specification of time by which this golden era is to be circumscribed. So also in the more precise and chronological prophecy of Daniel, where, if anywhere, we are to look for an exact determination of times and seasons, the final establishment and triumphs of the kingdom of the Messiah are expressly foretold without being limited to any special term of years. In the inspired interpretation of that part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in which a stone was seen to be cut out without hands, and after smiting, and prostrating, and dashing to pieces the colossal image of the vision, to swell to mountain magnitude, and finally to fill the whole earth, the monarch was informed that "in the days of these kings the God of heaven should set up a kingdom, which should never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, *and it shall stand for ever.* (And) forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter."* This magnificent result is more explicitly detailed in a subsequent vision with its corresponding explanation. "I saw in the mighty visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

* Dan. 2. 35–45.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth (meaning) of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings (kingdoms), which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, and for ever and ever. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."*

Now if this, according to the prevailing impression, be indeed prophetic of that period familiarly denominated the Millennium, how comes it to be announced in such unqualified terms, on the score of duration? Here is nothing indicating in the slightest degree that after the lapse of a thousand years so tremendous a reverse was to ensue as usually enters into the anticipations of the Christian world; nothing which would intimate that the sun of that beatific day, after a bright Millennial circuit, was to set in the dreary night of a

* Dan. 7. 13-27.

grand and almost universal apostasy. On the contrary, the language plainly bespeaks an era of unlimited duration. The saints are to possess the kingdom for ever and ever, implying a period, not of *eternal*, but of *indefinite* extent. We are, therefore, compelled to regard this and the kindred predictions of Daniel and other Old Testament prophets, as pointing to an age of the world entirely distinct from the Millennium of John, though nothing is more common than to confound them. This conviction is strengthened by the fact, that the event announced in the following vision of the *chronological* Prophet of the Old Testament is to take place *anterior* to the establishment of that kingdom of the saints to which allusion has just been made. Dan. 7. 9–11. 'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.'* Now we would ask, whether upon the com-

* "The machinery here employed is so obviously borrowed from the great day of final retribution, that probably most readers are led to imagine the subject of the prediction to be the *literal* day of judgment: yet, as we proceed, it is abundantly clear, that the events described in this high strain of poetry

mon theory of the Millennium, any event answering to this august representation has yet taken place, or is at all provided for among the antecedents of that period? Is it not, on the other hand, uniformly regarded as the pre-intimation of the general judgment, although the reason of its introduction in this connexion, as few have examined, so few can explain? But the general judgment is understood to *follow*, not *precede* the popular Millennium. Yet this judgment is most unquestionably to occur *prior* to the very period which the mass of the Christian world regard as the period of the Millennium. How can these things be? On the hypothesis which we advocate, all difficulty is removed; on any other, it is insuperable.

all take place *upon earth*, long before the dissolution of our present mundane system, and long before the *literal* judgment both of the quick and the dead. The thrones are placed, indeed, and the Ancient of days takes his seat upon the tribunal; but the whole of this is done for the *sole* purpose of temporally judging and destroying the corrupt Roman Empire; which by the machinations of the little horn, had been seduced into doctrinal apostasy and into active persecution. Accordingly, as the Roman Empire neither is, nor could be, judged anywhere save in this *present* world; so, even when the judgment in question is *closed*, Messiah and his saints have a kingdom allotted to them *under* the whole heaven. But if this allotted kingdom be *under* the whole heaven, then, indisputably, it must be *upon* this present earth. Hence we clearly learn, that the judgment, described by Daniel, occurs in the world which we *now* inhabit: and hence also, because circumstances are said to follow it which plainly *cannot* follow the *literal* day of judgment, we no less clearly learn, that it long precedes the *literal* judgment-day at the universal consummation."—*Faber's Sac. Calend. of Proph.* vol. i. p. 222.

The beast here mentioned, as the object of this wasting judgment, is expressly affirmed to be identical with the fourth or Roman kingdom of the vision, of which it is said, that it was to be "diverse from all kingdoms, and should devour the whole earth, and should tread it down, and break it in pieces." It is upon this bestial sovereignty, another name for the collective body of the modern European kingdoms which sprung from the old Roman Empire, and which are regarded in prophecy as a prolongation of its being, that the fiery judgment is to sit, "to take away its dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end;" after which it is, that the kingdom under the whole heaven is to be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. Now the fourth Beast of Daniel is confessedly the seven-headed and ten-horned Beast of the Revelation, which succeeded the Dragon, and whose reigning career is to be wound up with the expiration of the period of 1260 years from its commencement, an epoch to the borders of which we have now, in the revolution of centuries, and the eventuations of Providence, very closely approximated. The downfall of these despotic governments, in consequence of the spread and influence of liberal principles among the great mass of the population of Europe, is the appointed precursor in the counsels of Heaven to the ushering in of the ecumenical empire of Christ and his saints. The event we suppose to be alluded to in the expression—"I beheld till *the thrones were cast down;*" i. e. the thrones of the existing monarchies of Christendom, every one of which is a nuisance to the earth, that must be swept away before the advances of the kingdom of righteousness.

For "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." But true liberty cannot consist with hereditary sovereignty in any portion of the globe. Putting a crown on the head of a king is putting an extinguisher on the lamp of freedom. And accordingly, in the sublime annunciation of the period in question, which we affirm to be a period of unlimited continuance, and which is introduced by the sounding of the seventh trumpet, it is said, Rev. 11. 15. 'And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.' By this is intended, that the pernicious, but tolerated, domination which had hitherto been exercised by the sceptre-bearing powers of this world was to come to an end by being merged in the high and holy, the benign and welcome, lordship of the King of saints, who was to be crowned with many crowns, and to receive the willing homage of a regenerated world.*

* "Here again the machinery is borrowed from the great day of final retribution: yet it is perfectly clear, that the day of judgment thus described cannot be the *literal* day of judgment. At the *literal* day of judgment, this world is brought to *a close*; and nothing terminated succeeds it. But the day of judgment described by St. John, like that described by Daniel, is *followed* by various important transactions *upon* the identical earth which we now inhabit. Christ and his saints reign a thousand years, Satan deceives the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, and therefore obviously *upon* the earth: these nations having formed themselves into a great anti-christian confederacy, go up on the breadth of the earth; and therefore still *upon* the earth, for the purpose of attacking the saints and the beloved city: fire from heaven destroys them: and at length the *literal*

But as a change like this in the existing state of things could not be effected without violent revolutions, involving the downfall of governments, the ostracism of privileged orders, the cessation of long-established usages, the proscription of inveterate opinions; in a word, the upheaving of the ancient foundations of society; it is not unfitly represented by the imagery of a sitting 'judgment,' especially as the whole is to be accomplished under the immediate overruling providence of God. It is obvious, moreover, that no short period of time is necessary for the production of a result so stupendous. Being a change which is to be effected by the operation of *moral*, and not by miraculous agency, it must be gradual in its accomplishment; and although in our own day the elements are beginning to work, and the incipient developments to display themselves, yet the present generation may be permitted to see but a very few pages unrolled of the great volume of destiny. Death, the ruthless interrupter, will doubtless throw his impenetrable films before *our* eyes, and hide from us all but the early dawn of that day which is even now spreading its light upon the mountains. But 'instead of the

day of judgment arrives, when the dead, both small and great, stand before God. Hence it is evident that the day of judgment, which the apostle describes as commencing with the seventh Apocalyptic trumpet, cannot be the *literal* day of judgment at the end of the world. In fact, it not only precedes the literal day of judgment by more than a thousand years; but, like the parallel judgment described by Daniel, it commences *upon earth*, and has for its object the temporal destruction of the self-same apostatic Roman Empire."—*Faber's Sac. Calend. of Proph.* vol. i. p. 224.

fathers shall be the children.' The men of another generation shall arise to push forward the fortunes of the world. They shall behold the morning-tide waxing brighter and brighter to the perfect day, and finally rejoice in the effulgence of its high meridian.

> "So God hath greatly purposed.—
> Haste then, and wheel away a shattered world,
> Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see
> (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
> A world that does not hate and dread His laws,
> And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair
> The creature is that God pronounces good."
>
> COWPER.

We have remarked that according to the prevailing sentiments of Christians, that felicitous and glorious state of the church which forms the burden of the closing predictions of Isaiah, when the valleys shall be exalted, and the mountains and hills made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain—when the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together—when the gentiles shall come to the light of Zion, and kings to the brightness of her rising—when instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree—when for brass shall be brought gold, for iron silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron—when Jerusalem shall be created a rejoicing, and her people a joy—when the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice crying—when the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all the Lord's

holy mountain,—this surpassingly blissful state, we say, is usually considered as corresponding chronologically with the Millennium of John. But this predicted state, it will be found on examination, is identical with the 'new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,' and which, according to the Apostle Peter, is to be *preceded* by what is generally deemed to be the final conflagration of the earth. We would ask, then, what collocation, in point of time, is to be assigned to this great event? 'The day of the Lord,' says the Apostle, 'will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we, *according to his promise*, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' Here, then, allusion is made to a special *promise* contained in some other part of the scriptures, by which we are taught to expect a superlatively happy period to ensue, notwithstanding so great an event as the precedent passing away of the heavens and the earth. But the *promise* here referred to is no other than a part of the prophetic intimations of Isaiah in that very series of predictions which we have already cited as pointing to the period of the popular Millennium. For it is after the assurance—'behold, I create new heavens and a new earth'—that the strain of prophecy goes on to depict the felicities of that self-same state which is supposed to be identical with the Apocalyptic Millennium. The inference is inevitable, that if Isaiah and John have respect in their predictions to the same period, the con-

flagration is to precede the Millennium. This claims a very attentive consideration from those who may not be prepared to admit the views advocated in the foregoing pages.

For ourselves, we are well persuaded that the above-mentioned class of O. T. prophecies has no relation whatever, but that of centurial posteriority, to the Millennium announced in the Revelation. The only portions of this latter book referring to the same period are those contained in the two last chapters, giving a description of 'the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband,' and shadowing forth a triumphant and blessed state of the church on earth—a state not bounded by any special limitation of years. As to the conflagration of Peter, we are compelled, with Mede and others, to regard it as denoting not a literal, but a figurative, conflagration, adumbrating *the close of a dispensation*, the violent abrogation of a previous order of things, the dissolution and prostration of the entire fabric of governments, and policies, and systems formerly subsisting and essentially at variance with the genius of that new and happier economy which was to be introduced. In describing this great and momentous change as a destruction of the heavens and the earth by fire, the Apostle is merely adopting the lofty and grandiloquent style of the former prophets, who frequently represent great revolutions, whether secular or ecclesiastical, under the imagery of fires, earthquakes, the removal of mountains and islands, the falling of stars, the departing of the heavens as a scroll, and the wreck as it were of the

whole terraqueous and planetary system.* Thus Isaiah, Ch. 24, speaking of an event of this kind, says; "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.—The earth mourneth and languisheth, the world languisheth and fadeth away.—The curse hath devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: Therefore, the *inhabitants of the earth are burned*, and few men left.—The windows from on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, *the earth is clean dissolved*, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again." So also Ch. 34. 2–4. where the Most High declares his indignation to be upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies, he moreover affirms, that "*all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll:* and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree." Thus also Nah. 1. 5. where the judicial vengeance of God against his enemies is intimated, it is said, "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, *and the earth is burned at his presence*, yea, the world and all that dwell therein."

* "Great earthquakes, and the shaking of heaven and earth, so as to distract and overthrow them; the creating a new heaven and earth, and the passing away of an old one, or the beginning and end of a world, (are put) for the rise and ruin of a body politic, signified thereby."—*Sir I. Newton's Observ. on the Proph.* part i. ch. 2.

These passages afford, we apprehend, a clew to the parallel language of Peter. And if the destruction of Jerusalem be described by terms borrowed from the final consummation of all things, we see not why such a stupendous moral revolution as that which is to precede the new heavens and the new earth may not properly be shadowed out by the elevated diction of the Apostle. The words, therefore, like most other of the prophetical phrases which we have had occasion to consider, denote not a sudden, but a gradual and progressive abolition of the things previously existing.* The *destruction* of the mundane sphere by fire denotes the wasting visita-

* "The Holy Ghost, therefore, shows us affirmatively and explicitly, that the old heaven and earth are removed to make way for a new heaven and new earth, that is, a new government and a new people, as we have before shown these symbols signify. Now I say that the removal of the old heaven and earth, and the introduction of the new heaven and earth, are symbols of a prophecy which has not its accomplishment in a sudden revolution or moment, but in progress of time; that is, the new heaven and earth begin to be constituted, and have the beginning of their existence, as the constitution of the old heaven and earth wears away, which is done by *steps*. And whereas some people are apt to fancy a thorough change in the visible constitution of the universe as to the heavenly bodies, this is not only inconsistent with the nature of the prophetical style, which assumes these objects merely for symbols of the political world, but also contrary to the constant opinion of the primitive fathers, who, as I have shown elsewhere, understood this renovation as we have explained it. And if there be any alteration in the visible frame of nature, it is only as a consequence or necessary condition, to make this earth and heaven a proper receptacle of the glorified saints."—*Daubus'. Perpet. Comment.* p. 964.

tions of the wrath of heaven upon the entire fabric of those ancient policies, oppressions, and delusions, under which the earth had so long groaned. It is the passing away of the old constitution of the world. The 'elements' of error were to be dissolved and 'melted' by the purifying fire of truth; while the new heavens and the new earth are but another name for that renovated order of things, moral, mental, and political, which is the natural result of the universal and genuine influence of the Gospel of Christ. Let the religion of the Bible have but its legitimate operation, let it do its 'perfect work' among men, and it would inevitably effect a complete transformation in the state of the world—one fitly represented by the new heavens and new earth, an expression pointing to a *moral* instead of a *physical* renovation.

And this we apprehend to be in fact the state which is now to be anticipated by the Christian world. Discarding as a fond, but fallacious dream, the idea of any particular period of *a thousand years* to be distinguished by unprecedented prosperity, peace, and triumph to the church, and to be followed by a proportionably calamitous reverse, we are to look upon the page of prophecy as disclosing far other and brighter prospects to the eye of faith. Fully and adequately to unfold these prospects would be to enter into a minute exposition of the two concluding chapters of the Apocalypse in which they are so fully, though mystically, shadowed forth. But as the specific design of the present work does not embrace such an investigation, we shall wave an entrance upon it, especially as a volume of no mean dimensions would be requisite for a thorough canvassing of the

points which it would necessarily involve. We barely remark that the canons of exegesis by which the interpretation of the book of Revelation is to be governed, particularly in what relates to the future, are not yet invested with that demonstrative certainty in the estimation of Christians, which would warrant the extended developement of our private views upon the subject. We have no doubt, however, that a process of inquiry instituted with reference to that point, would result in the conviction, that many of the Scriptural representations which are now generally understood of *the heavenly state*, or *of the scene of eternal blessedness in another world*, do in reality describe a state of things which is yet to ensue *on earth*, and of which mortal men, inhabiting houses of clay, are to be the happy witnesses, objects, agents, and chroniclers. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold *the tabernacle of God is with men*, and he will *dwell with them*, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: FOR THE FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

"O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?

* * * * * * *

One song employs all nations.—
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks

Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

COWPER.

THE END.

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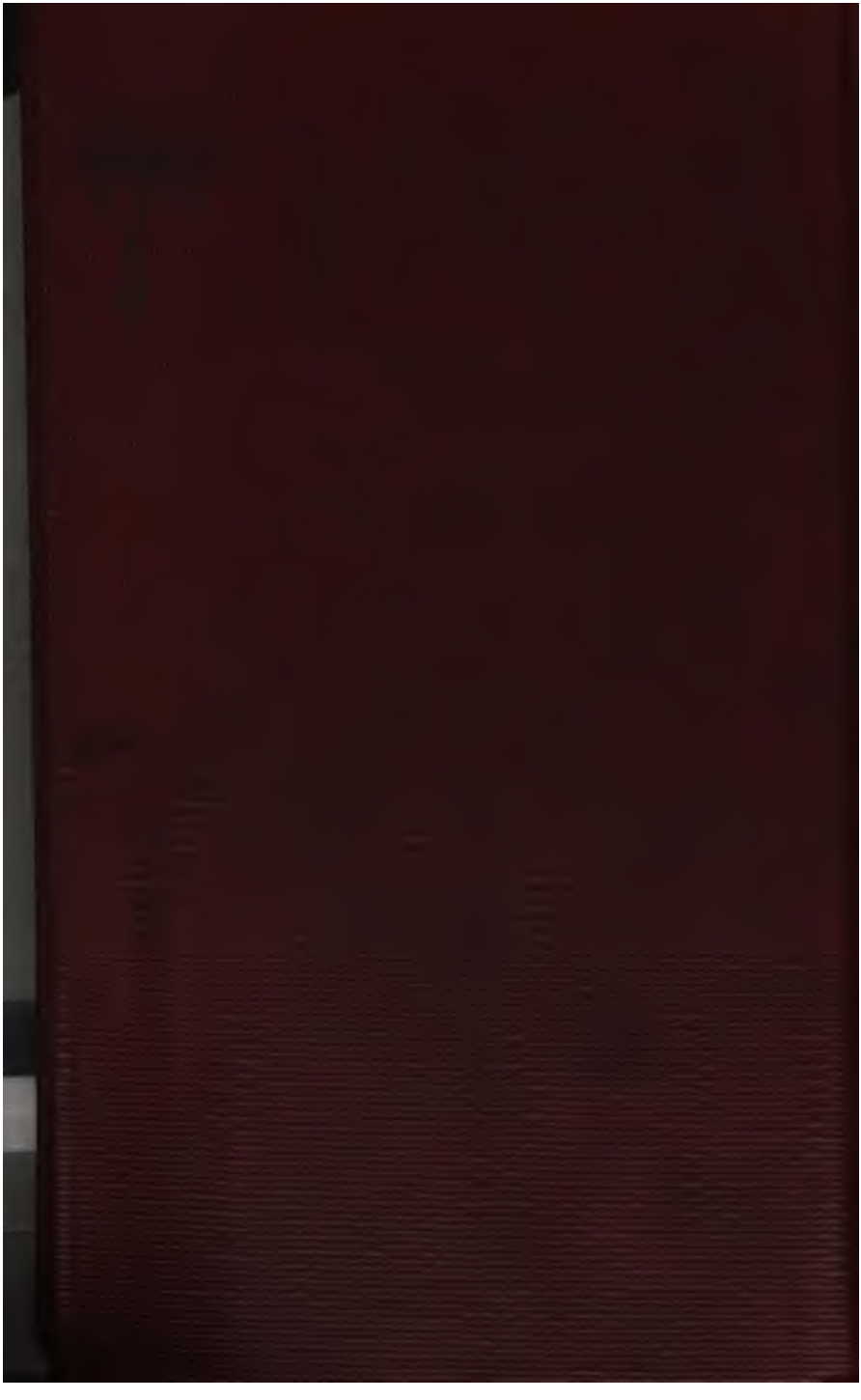
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